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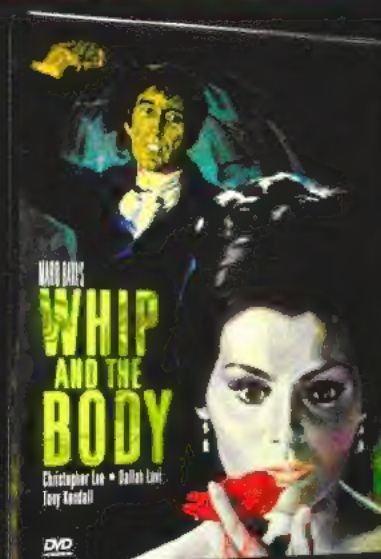


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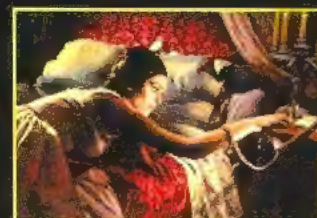


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## Features and Departments

- 4 Scarlet Letters
- 9 Frankly Scarlet
- 14 The News Hound
- 16 Ain't Life a Beach?
- 20 Screen and Screen Again
- 28 The Man With Three Brains:  
Curt Siodmak
- 33 Five Finger Exercise:  
The Beast With Five Fingers
- 35 Forrest J Ackerman's  
Crimson Chronicles
- 36 The Pictures of Dorian Gray
- 48 Picture Perfect: Hurd Hatfield
- 54 Worth a Thousand Words:  
Helmut Berger
- 62 Empire of the Imagination:  
She Who Must Be Obeyed
- 68 Horror Italian Style
- 72 Book Ends
- 77 Classifieds

COVER: THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY (1945)



# Scarlet Letters

I have been a subscriber since *Scarlet Street* #6 and finally feel compelled to write. First off, I am consistently impressed by the overall high quality of your mag. Issue #39's interviews with John Agar, Gene Evans, and Curt Siodmak were terrific, as were most of the other articles. Personally, I like 'em long and in-depth like that, so don't change a thing.

One thing I must mention is the SCREEN AND SCREEN AGAIN section. I really appreciate the reviews like the one on the four Image Ed Wood DVD releases, particularly the discussion of print quality and completeness, extras, etc. Nothing frosts my cookies worse than one of those reviews that's basically a glorified plot synopsis and a few personal opinions with no mention of the quality of the tape or disc and print of the film used. I'm basing purchasing decisions on these reviews and want to know if the print is nasty, or cut, or if there are special features, etc. I think most of your readers have seen a lot of these movies and really don't need a detailed plot synopsis, unless the movie is little-seen or newly reissued after a long period of unavailability. Same goes for feature articles.

Next, I have to address the issue of your alleged "hidden agenda." I find it infinitely amusing that certain (homophobic?) readers find your coverage of gay subtexts and themes in movies so unsettling. Considering the apparently higher-than-average number of gays in the entertainment industry, in the past as well as the present, it should be a surprise to no one that gay thematics have found their way into many films over the years. I think it's ironic (and just a little disturbing) that *Scarlet Street* (and other genre mags) can run numerous cheese-cake shots of scantily-clad or even naked actresses and no one objects, but run a photo of a seminude actor and the letters of complaint pour in, accusing you of pandering to homosexuals. Now when I see photos like the shot of Elvis on his surfboard on page 16, I just chuckle, 'cause I figure you're doing it as much to cause your homophobic readers as for any other reason. Or maybe not at all. At any rate, please do not bow to the reactionary pressure; I find SS's take on horror/sci-fi/mystery cinema refreshing and thought-provoking.

Finally, I have to point out a few minor errors in #39. At the bottom of the first column of FRANKLY SCARLET, Mr. Valley uses the word "pouring" where he means "poring" (look it up in your *Funk & Wagnall's*). This is one of the most common usage errors and also one of the silliest, if you take it literally. Second, in Brooke Perry's Mr. DONOVAN article, he refers to Von Stroheim's mangled line readings, using his reference to the "giggly saw" as an example. Unfortunately, this is not a mangled line reading at all; a

Gigli saw is an actual medical instrument, a specialized saw made of wire stretched on a handle (the simple description) used in orthopedic and neurosurgery to cut through hard tissues, presumably bone in Dr. Von Stroheim's case. Picky, I know, but if you're going to take Von Stroheim to task you should make sure you've got your facts straight. Otherwise, you're all doing a great job. Keep it up.

Paul Tabili

Racine, Wisconsin

Now, Paul, would we ever tweak our readers? As for the errors: actually, Brooke only said that von Stroheim's accent made the line readings amusing, not mangled. We know there's such a thing as a Gigli saw, though we did misspell it. "Pouring" is the second instance in as many issues in which a typo in my column was corrected and improperly saved, resulting in the error finding its way into print. However, "pouring" is chicken feed compared to the gaff in #40, which transformed "I humbly ask" into "I humply ask!" Or maybe we were just tweaking away, eh...?

Enjoyed the article on Sherlock Holmes and THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES. I was wondering if anyone remembers the parody movie called MURDER BY DEATH, starring Peter Falk? In this parody, such great detectives as Sam Spade, Agatha Christie's Miss Marple and Hercule Poirot, and (of course) Sherlock Holmes try to assist Truman Capote with a murder case. I would like to see a fea-



ture in *Scarlet Street* on this fascinating movie, in which the greatest crossover event of some of the world's greatest detectives of literature all meet to ponder this case.

I immensely enjoyed *Scarlet Street* #40 and had a fun time reading about ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET FRANKENSTEIN (along with Dracula and Wolf Man). I have always loved crossovers and will never forget Jose Farmer's *Tarzan Alive!* and his other book *Doc Savage: His Apocalyptic Life*, in which he places Mr. Moto, James Bond, Sherlock Holmes, Fu Manchu, Tarzan, Doc Savage, The Avenger, The Scarlet Pimpernel, and The Spider into one family that experienced mutations from an asteroid. These two books are spectacular reads and I wouldn't mind seeing an article on them in a future issue of *Scarlet Street*!

Paul Dale Roberts

Elk Grove, CA

Glad you enjoyed the Sherlock Holmes material, Paul. We're trying to increase our coverage of the Great Detective, since he was one of the mainstays of the early editions of *Scarlet Street*. It certainly doesn't hurt that new TV movies are in production. In addition to THE HOUND, we've had THE SIGN OF FOUR, and word has it the next show combines "A Scandal in Bohemia" and "The Bruce-Partington Plans." Now, if Matt Frewer would only stop wearing those silly hats and Persian slippers...

I must object to the much-repeated view that ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET FRANKENSTEIN is, as Mark Clark opines (SS #40), the finest horror comedy ever made. Three that are better come to mind: Bob Hope's THE GHOST BREAKERS, Bill Murray's GHOSTBUSTERS, and Mel Brook's YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN. I'm sure there are others, such as the old dark house frolic ONE FRIGHTENED NIGHT, that are finer. Clark's article reflects an enthusiasm for Abbott and Costello's films I have never felt, although they do shine as radio comedians. They are not the problem, however. The film is awkward—despite being well-played and skillfully directed—because of the script's uneasy mixture of nostalgia and sarcasm. Not enough was done with Lugosi's part to soften the excessively farcical approach—it simply lacks the atmosphere of the best horror comedies.

Continued on page 8

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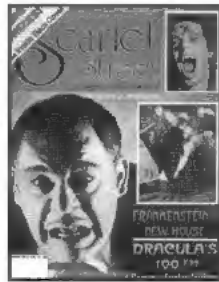
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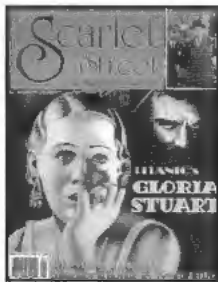
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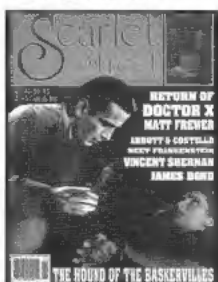
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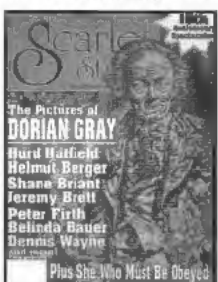
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## SCARLET LETTERS

Continued from page 4

Director Vincent Sherman's insightful remarks to interviewer Todd Livingston about Peter Lorre have me imagining the ideal Poe film: in 1939, Lorre would play Prospero in "The Masque of the Red Death" to conclude a trilogy of 40-minute adaptations, beginning with Orson Welles' directing and starring in "The Fall of the House of Usher," followed by a very youthful Vincent Price and Lorre doing "A Cask of Amontillado" with a bit more seriousness than in the Corman version. Actually, Corman's *TOMB OF LIGEIA* and the late Roger Vadim's *SPIRITS OF THE DEAD* are the only Poe films that are classics. I hope you'll feature an in-depth article on the latter soon, in commemoration of Vadim.

John Hitz

Lexington, KY

An Edgar Allan Poe feature is in the works, John. I can't say I agree with your hitz and run comments about *ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET FRANKENSTEIN* and its stars. Much as I love Bud and Lou, their radio work pales in comparison to their movie and TV turns. I don't rank *MEET FRANKENSTEIN* as the finest scare comedy—I'd choose another A&C opus, *HOLD THAT GHOST*, instead—but it's considerably better, I'd venture, than the vastly overblown and overrated *GHOSTBUSTERS*.

✉

What's my favorite issue of *Scarlet Street*? Easy. Same as it's always been since I started subscribing: the next one.

Someone once said, "History is the highest form of gossip." Now, the aura surrounding each and every issue of *Scarlet Street* is, for me, rare, precious, and indefinable. But whenever I do think about it, the above quote always pops into my mind. *Scarlet Street* is, first and foremost, specialized film history, but it's something more than that. . . it's presented in a format uniquely its own that is more than a stapled bundle of facts and photos. For me, it's not unlike what the atmosphere of an elite gentleman's club in Victorian or Edwardian London must have been, full of explorers, literati, diplomats, politicians, judges and lawyers, public servants, entrepreneurs, and the fascinating, convivial "gossip" that those kinds of people must have exchanged over cigars and cognac. . . the perspective and the knowledge of certain topics that could only be delivered by those "in the know" and never intended for nor indeed even demanded by the consumers of newspapers and periodicals intended to appeal to the broadest of audiences. (Not to ignore the ladies; I'm sure they would have been interested, too.)

How to relate this to more modern times? Well, remember when we were kids. . . *Famous Monsters of Filmland* was all right; it satisfied the appetite temporarily, like a candy bar; but admit it, for a lot of us the bigger thrill was when the more meaty, more substantial, more sophisticated in both reporting and humor, new issue of *Castle of Frankenstein* hit the racks, especially the first dozen or so of them. *Scarlet Street* is the only magazine

of today that rekindles that feeling for me (and I read a lot)—and Richard Valley, in editorial skills, in sophistication, in his assembly of writers and reviewers and researchers and interviewers, in the quality of people he attracts as consumers of his product, in business acumen, in work ethic and devotion to maintaining the unique personality (no doubt an extension of his own, although we've never met) and the high quality of the magazine for us the readers on a regular, but killer, schedule, is light years beyond Calvin Beck.

Someone on the *Scarlet Street* Message Boards mentioned subscribing to the new *Famous Monsters*. I once read a complete issue of the new *Famous Monsters*. . . entirely while standing at the news stand, cover to cover, without paying for it. 'Nuff said, no? But *Scarlet Street*? Ah, there's an all-day lollipop for you (and then some). *Scarlet Street* is the three-day getaway with the exotic beauty in the Hotel Las Brisas in Acapulco, dining on rare cuisine, dancing in white tie and tails, swimming in the heavily-fenced private and personal hideaway pools. Its regular columns are like the refrigerator/bars in the rooms of classy places like that: no matter how many times you look through the vast and singular assortment of bottles on display within, you always find something new and exciting. *Famous Monsters*, on the other hand, is the drab you take into the crib in the back of the cantina; the mercenary love lasts only as long as the duration of the cigarette burning in the ashtray on the cheap night stand wedged between the bed and the wall.

But be more specific, Kid! Well, to single out some are to damn all the marvelous rest by omission. Still, I'll offer a rave for Boze Hadleigh's Anne Baxter interview. (*Scarlet Street* #22) Not only was it full of fascinating history, but also gossipy bitchiness—the best, the worst, and the most fascinating components of scholarship, interviewing technique, and, indeed, humanity itself. Others in that vein, for those reasons, that are most memorable are the ones with Marc Lawrence, Sheldon Leonard, Lawrence Tierney, and—well, you get the idea.

The articles? Well, first and foremost, Ken Hanke comes to mind. The best way to describe Ken's thoroughness with his articles is by analogy: Ken writes articles like I mow my property. I have a section of field that is impossible to see no matter the vantage point, yet I mow it with the same meticulousness that I do with the front yard, by the public street. People have often asked me, "Why do you spend all that effort on that section? Nobody can see it." And I reply, "I can see it." I feel that's what Ken brings to his articles. Beyond the main thoroughfares, Ken dives into the culs-de-sac, the alleys, the dimly-lit warrens that thread into the avenue of his story, with equal parts investigative ardor, ferocity, and panache. I feel that he is one of those people who is his own worst critic, and he expends all this effort to satisfy himself. This is the antithesis of

Continued on page 10



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# Frankly Scarlet



Well, well, well—it's Anniversary Time and what can I say? The last decade has passed like—well, like 10 years. That's right, Scarlet Streeters—strange as it seems, it's our 10th Anniversary, and if there was any doubt in my mind that it's a momentous occasion, it vanished when I received the following fantastic ode from our own Forrest J Ackerman:

*Scarlet Street!*

It's so neat

It can't be beat!

It's my beat!

All blest wishes for your 10th Anniversary. Looking forrward to your 20th. (I'll only be 94!) Your fan and contributor . . .

—Forry

It was Uncle 4E who, some 44 years ago, conjured up the horror-zine genre with fellow wizard James Warren when the latter engaged the former to edit his electrifying new mag: *Famous Monsters of Filmland*. From that world-astounding collaboration sprang such offspring as *Castle of Frankenstein*, *Fantastic Monsters of the Films*, *Cinefantastique*, *Filmfax*—and *Scarlet Street: The Magazine of Mystery and Horror*!

And speaking of Mr. Warren, hot on the heels of Forry's jolly jingle came the following merry missive:

Warm congratulations to Richard Valley and *Scarlet Street* on this, your 10th Anniversary issue. I know a little bit about editing and publishing magazines of this sort, and yours is the best of the breed. A credit to the genre, *Scarlet Street* is well written, handsomely produced, beautifully edited. It's the only one I read.

—Jim Warren

Praise, paeans, and plaudits from pioneering Forry Ackerman and Jim Warren—it's sort of like getting a diploma, isn't it?

The great joy of life on *Scarlet Street* is the folks you get to work with, and any list of those essential to our success must start with managing editor Tom Amorosi, who's been there from the beginning—whether he wanted to be or not. It's taken a 10th of a century, but I've at last learned to listen to Tom because he gives good advice, and Tom has at last learned to tell the difference between George Zucco and Lionel Atwill. It's been an uphill battle—for both of us!

Then there's snarling John J. Mathews, our News Hound, who has never missed an issue. And John E. Payne, whose artwork has graced our pages from the beginning. And Kevin G. Shinnick and John Brunas, who must have signed run of the play contracts. And columnists David Stuart Davies (*OUR MAN ON BAKER STREET*) and Ross Care (*RECORD RACK*), and writer Lelia Loban . . .

There's assistant editor Dan Clayton and associate editor Ken Hanke—Dan joining us 'round the halfway point with *Scarlet Street* #23 and Ken with #29. There's such valued former associates as Jessie Lilley, Sally Jane Gellert, and Jill Clavitt. There's such faithful readers and friends as Fynsworth Alley music producer Bruce Kimmel and such interviewees turned pals as Kasey Rogers, Bill Condon, Tommy Kirk, Jack Grinnage, and Carol Ann Susi. There's our family of advertisers who sign up for each and every issue. And there's solid, loving support from our actual families, including Tom's mother and aunts (Mary Amorosi, Ann and Toni Palladino) and my own ever-feisty mom, Philomena Valley, who has never ever let me down . . .

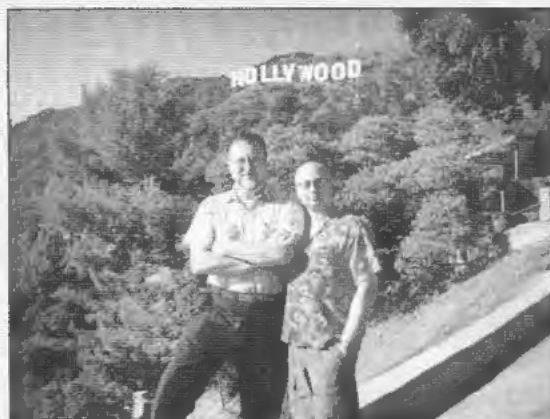
Impossible to list everyone, of course, so I won't try. Let it suffice to say that every name that has ever found its way on to our masthead belongs to someone who has helped make our Street a Scarlet Success!

\*\*\*

Space is short, but I want to share some pix from our visit to Hollywood last October, where Tom and I were Forry's guests at the incredible Ackermansion. That's us in the top photo, pretending we're tourists. The next shot was taken at the Cult Movie Con, where we introduced major STRANGERS ON A TRAIN fan Bruce Kimmel to murder victim "Miriam Haynes," better known as Kasey Rogers. Beneath that we find the one and only Dr. Ackula (accept no substitutes) surrounded by devoted Forryfans Stuart Gardner, Phil Palmieri, me and a cat, Anne Hardin, and Jeff Roberts. Last but far from least is our chum Bob Burns, clutching his pal, King Kong! Bob was kind enough to open up his home for a fascinating tour in which I actually got to sit in the fantastic, original Time Machine!

Life is good . . .

Richard Valley









like yours that reveal such actors as Nina Foch or John Agar to be personable, interesting, and just downright "with it."

David Wilke  
Lexington, KY

David, we've haven't done very much on Westerns in these Scarlet pages—yet—but you'll find the genre much discussed on our incredibly popular online message boards. Why not join us at [www.scarletstreet.com](http://www.scarletstreet.com), and bring along a sidekick or two!

I had to tell you what a good time I've had on your website. What a treat to get a glimpse behind the scenes! Your publication has always had the quality of seeming like it's talking to me personally, and now, on your message boards, you are talking to me personally!

Peter Wilcox  
Princeton, NJ

If you want to see what our pal Peter is talking about, gentle Scarlet Streeters, join us at [www.scarletstreet.com](http://www.scarletstreet.com). The Street's always jumpin', believe me.

Another HOUND? I've already counted 14, and have seen nearly half of them. I once watched every version in my collection in the space of a single week, taking notes for comparison, to see which characters appeared and did what to whom in each. The Rathbone version simplified things, leaving out a few characters—but at the time, was the most faithful and the very first Holmes film set in the proper time period! The Cushing version (1959) added references to druids and actually

changed the identity of the killer! (The nerve of Hammer!) The Tom Baker version was the most accurate to the book to date, but suffered from a very poor Watson and low budget. The Ian Richardson, though made for television, had the look of a feature film about it, was the best produced, had the best cast, but clearly was intended as a remake of the Rathbone version, as it diverged from the book in some of the same places! (Richardson became my favorite Holmes—until Jeremy Brett arrived a very short time afterwards!)

And then there's the Brett version, which seems to have used the same script as the Baker version, only with a better budget. This was tragically let down by a very depressed Brett (who'd just lost his wife) and—surprisingly for his series—some terrible, inept directing and editing. I could watch most of the Jeremy Brett episodes over and over—but not this one.

Regarding TONY ROME: Isn't Jill St John just about 100 times better in this than she was in DIAMONDS ARE FOREVER? Between her and Raquel Welch (in LADY IN CEMENT, which I also enjoyed very much), has anybody noticed that, in the sixties, Frank Sinatra got better-looking leading ladies than Sean Connery did? (What a tragedy that some behind-the-scenes nonsense prevented Welch from being in THUNDERBALL—as I've heard she had been the producers' first choice!)

Henry R. Kujawa  
Camden, NJ

Congrats for making 40 issues. I've been collecting since Issue #5 and have been a genre collector for 30 years. Each issue has so much variety it keeps me glued to my seat for hours on end. I especially liked the article on THE RETURN OF DOCTOR X. Keep these articles coming! (Other favorites include PARAMOUNT HORRORS, THE WOLF MAN, and especially the David Manners two-parter of some time ago.)

In Australia, we only get most American genre magazines at Import Shops (of which Adelaide has two). Sometimes copies don't surface at all—even though I have a standing order with one!

Anyway, *Scarlet Street* is a great favorite of mine, always received in anticipation. Look forward to the 10 year anniversary! Keep up the great work, and a great and successful new year to you all!

Neville Crowhurst  
South Australia

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Yes, kids, it's the *Scarlet Street* Slightly Mangled Special. We have in our vaults some issues with minor defects: price tags glued on the covers, a folded page, a gypsy curse scrawled on the classifieds . . . nothing too grim, but enough to render them unsuitable for sale at the usual rate.

So, gang . . . now's your chance to get the *Scarlet Street* you've been missing! Just fill out the handy coupon stage left and we'll send you copies that, in the words of Ygor, are "broken, crippled, and distorted"—just a teensy bit.

Gosh, fellas, there's only one thing worries me—when I get Lou's brain, will I still be smart enough to read *Scarlet Street*?

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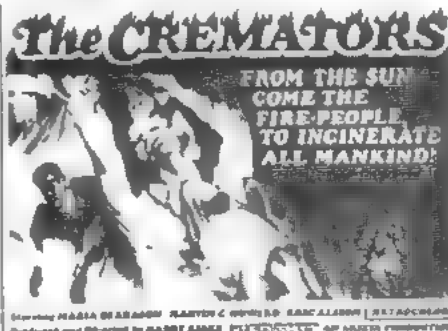
**THE RISK** (1956) Peter Cushing, Tony Britton, Thorley Walters, Donald Pleasence, Ian Bannen. Cushing heads a research lab that has created a super virus that cures bubonic plague. The government sees it as a horrible germ-warfare weapon and forbids them to publish their work. Will they publish anyway or give it to another government? The great thriller keeps you guessing to the end. From 16mm. \$224

**DESTINATION SPACE** (1956) Harry Townes, John Agar, Cecil Kellaway, Ed Platt. First time on video! Just when you thought you'd seen all the '50s sci-fi ever made, this forgotten b&w gem shows up. Destination Space is a terrific, slickly produced space opera with Agar and Townes in charge of a giant space station. During an attempted rocket launch, a meteor smashes into the station, crippling it. Later it's discovered that an overload within the rocket will cause a nuclear explosion within minutes. HIGHLY recommended. 16mm. \$224

**SO DARLING, SO DEADLY** (1967) Tony Kendall, Brad Harris, Barbara Frey. A great Kendall-Harris team-up—the best we offer. The boys are a couple of slick investigators hired to stop the mysterious "Golden Dragon" from getting possession of a laser death ray! Plenty of great action scenes. Highly recommended. Color 16mm. \$246

**ON THE COMET** (1968) Emil Horvath, Magda Veszoly, Frantisek Filipovsky. The fourth of Karel Zeman's Verne films is an unforgettable voyage into fantastic visual wizardry. Adapted from Verne's *Hector Servadac*, it recounts how a massive chunk of the Earth becomes a comet, soaring through space with all of the area's populace still on it. It ultimately drifts into a collision course with Earth! This charming sci-fi fantasy is a visual delight. Color 16mm. \$226

**VOYAGE INTO SPACE** (1970) Mitsunobu Kameko, Akio Ito, Shozaburo Jase. One of the most hilarious, campy sci-fi movies you'll ever see. Giant super hero Johnny Sokko is pitted against the evil monster Dracoon. He and his flying robot try to stop this terrifying monster from destroying Tokyo. Call your friends and grab a couple of six-packs—it's party time. Color from 16mm. \$227



**THE CREMATORS** (1972) Marvin Howard, Marie Di Azagon, Eric Adam. A scientist doing research near a remote part of this Great Lakes region discovers a series of bizarre droplets that seem to have a life of their own and are in some way connected to a gigantic energy monster that lurks in the waters below. Soon bodies are found that have been incinerated into neat piles of ashes. Color 16mm. \$226

**WAR OF THE ROBOTS** (1974 aka REACTOR) Antonio Sabato, James Stuart, Melissa Long. A bunch of robot creatures kidnap an Earth woman. Her astronaut pals hop in their ships and pursue them across space, eventually running in to all kinds of alien resistance. This film is filled with more pitched space battles and ray gun fights than you can shake a light saber at. Holy, but fun. Color, 35mm. \$229

## HORROR

**THE DANCE OF DEATH** (1960) Felix Martin, Françoise Brion, Michelle Mercier. This scary gem takes place in and about an eerie country mansion and local cemetery. A playboy is threatened with death. He hires a detective to protect him. Terrifying things soon happen. The sinister shadow of an unknown killer prowls the grounds in the back of the night. Things eventually end up in a local graveyard where our hero is sealed within a cement tomb! From 16mm. \$277



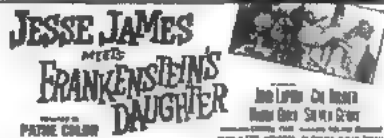
**BLOOD OF NOSTRADAMUS** (1960) German Robles, Aurora Alvaredo, Julio Aleman, Domingo Soler Mambor. Robles is a vampire descended from the prophet, Nostradamus. He and his weird hunchback have marked a police inspector for death. The police go after him with silver bullets, but in the end they stake him to a fun night on the town. So bad it's great—don't miss it. 16mm. \$278

**JESSE JAMES MEETS FRANKENSTEIN'S DAUGHTER** (1963) John Lupton, Nerde Onyx, Cal Bolder, Nestor Palma. One of the great bad movies of all time, directed by master Z. Immortal William Bessidine. Frankenstein's daughter goes west and stinks up Dad's research again. She puts the original monster's brain in the skull of one of Jesse James' pals, even calls him Igor. Color 16mm. \$112

**CURSE OF THE SWAMP CREATURE** (1968) John Agar, Jeff Alexander, Françoise York. Another great bad movie from the 1960s. A mad doctor creates big, hulking reptile monsters at his secret lab in the Everglades. Using local natives for his experiments, his creations walk around with goofy fangs and ping-pong ball eyes—really goofy. Yet, Curse of the Swamp Creature has many of the usual horror-so-f elements that so many of us baby-boomers love. Color 16mm. \$279

**GRAVE OF THE VAMPIRE** (1972) William Smith, Michael Pataki, Kitty Valacher. A vampire rapes a woman in an open grave after murdering her boyfriend atop a headstone. She later finds she's pregnant. After birth, she finds her baby can't survive without blood, so she regularly fills the baby's bottle with real blood. When he grows up, he sets out to put his vampire Dad back in his grave—permanently! A schlocky cheesy low budget delight. Rated R. Color 35mm. \$280

**THE LORELEY'S GRASP** (1972) Tony Kendall, Helga Line. A terrific monster movie! A beautiful woman transforms into a snarling lizard-type monster that rips apart local citizens in-and-around a forest-shrouded girls school filled with bikini-clad beauties. Kendall is hired to hunt the creature down but is torn between his love for the mysterious Line, and his growing suspicion of whom she really is. The best Euro-horror film we've seen in a long while. Color 16mm. \$281

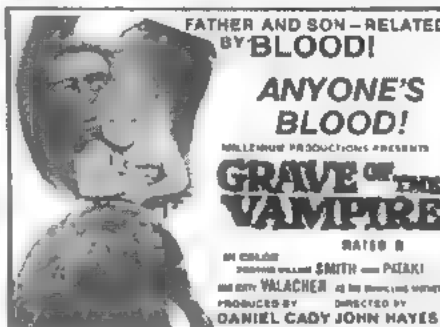


**PIGS\*** (1972) Marc Lawrence, Katherine Ross, Jesse Vint, Paul Hickay. A crazy woman escapes from the booby hatch. She meets up with a demented old pig farmer. Together they commit several grisly murders, after which they take their victims' bodies and use them as pig slop! Later, the pigs are sold for human consumption. Men feed nice anybody? A movie you won't forget soon. Color 16mm. \$282

**THE WICKER MAN** (1973) Christopher Lee, Ingrid Pitt, Edward Woodward. UNCUT at 101 minutes! One of the best horror films ever. A British policeman is lured to a remote offshore island village to investigate the disappearance of a girl. However, what the villagers really have in mind is too horrible for words. NOTE: This is the original Magnum pre-record that's no longer available in stores. It's recorded at SP. Limited quantity, so order soon! Rated R. Color 35mm. \$283

**DR. TARR'S TORTURE DUNGEON\*** (1973) Arthur Hanes, Claudio Brook, Ellen Sherman. This is one surreal movie. A reporter goes to a bizarre insane asylum in the middle of a haunted forest. There's some really, really weird stuff going on—a strange story line. Some say this is weird, others say it's a classic. You decide. Sounds like it was dubbed in a garage can. Rated R. Color 35mm. \$284

**THE BOOGEY MAN** (1960) John Carradine, Suzanne Love, Ron James. A girl and her brother guard the secret of a childhood murder. Years later they return to the scene of the crime but discover a supernatural horror from beyond! Recommended. NOTE: This is the original Magnum pre-record (recorded at SP), no longer available in stores. Quantity is limited so order now! Rated R. Color 35mm. \$285



## SWORD & SANDAL

**ATLAS\*** (1960) Michael Forest, Frank Wolf, Barbara Morris. At last, a beautiful quality copy of this fine sword and sandal thriller! Our master is now from a stunning 35mm Technicolor print. Wolf is great as the evil Ptolemides who convinces the mighty Atlas to represent him in battle but eventually finds himself at odds with the sadistic ruler. American made—no dubbing. Recommended. Color 35mm. \$358

**APHRODITE, GODDESS OF LOVE** (1960) Antonio De Tella, Isabelle Conry, Irene Turp. A sword and sandal rarity. The mistress of a powerful Roman official swears him to persecute Christians as an act of revenge against a past lover. Lots of action and intrigue during the time of Nero. Italian with English subtitles. Color 35mm. \$314

**HERCULES AND THE MASKED RIDER** (1960) Alan Steele, Ettore Manni. A carefree soldier is banished after making a play for the wrong woman (she was engaged to another guy). He eventually meets up with a band of gypsies and wins their respect when he overcomes their muscle-bound leader. Color from 16mm. \$311

**DAMON AND PYTHIAS** (1962) Guy Williams, Don Burnett, Rene Oechel. A lovable rogue, Damon, and his band rob a young Greek philosopher Pythias. Before long, they are both fleeing from the unruly troops of Dionysus, a tyrannical Greek ruler. Damon and Pythias soon become fast friends and go through many exciting adventures together. A lovely sword and sandal thriller. 16mm. \$312

**TWO GLADIATORS** (1964) Richard Harrison, Morris Offer, Mimmo Palmara. Upon the death of Marcus Aurelius, a Senator of the Tribune sets out to find the twin brother of the cruel new Roman emperor. The Senator hopes to convince the lost brother to return to Rome and claim his rightful place on the throne of the Empire. Lots of thrusting swords and arena combat. Not bad. Color 16mm. \$313



## SILENT THRILLS

**THE WHISTLE** (1921) William S. Hart, Frank Brownlee, Myrtle Stedman Bill is a milk worker who urges his boss to make necessary safety changes. His boss ignores him. As luck would have it, Bill's son is killed in a milk accident when he is mangled in an unprotected belt. Later Bill rescues his boss's son from a car that plunges into a river. Vangelis! Bill then kidnaps the child! Music score. 16mm. ST47

**PHANTOM OF THE MOULIN ROUGE** (1924) Albert Peyssan Sandra Milovonov, Georges Veulier A Rame Clair fantasy. A man goes to the lonely estate of the mysterious Dr. Renault, whose strange experiments release the man's spirit from his body. The spirit reeks paranormal havoc across Paris. However, when Renault is found with a "lifeless" body, he is arrested for murder. An autopsy is scheduled! Can the spirit return to its body in time? Music score. 16mm. ST48

**HOUSE OF USHER/DEVIL'S BALL/TRIP TO THE MOON** (1928, 1933, 1932) Three bizarre short subject classics. Melville Webber's *Fall of the House of Usher* is a tale of creeping madness accented with weird visual images. *At the Devil's Ball* (technically not a silent film) is without a doubt, one of the most fantastic pieces of stop-motion animation you will ever see. *Meties A Trip to the Moon* is another visual delight and a must for all early sci-fi collectors. All in all this is a must have tape. Music scores on all. From 16mm. ST48

**THE DRAKE CASE** (1929) Universal Gladys Brockwell, Forrest Stanley, Robert Frazer, James Crane. A divorced woman, whose ex-husband is supposedly dead, discovers that not only is he alive but that he's remarried! However, when the new wife ends up murdered, the ex-wife has the blame pointed at her! Music score. 16mm. ST50



## FORGOTTEN HORRORS

NOTE: All Forgotten Horrors titles are just \$12.95 (unless otherwise noted); plus \$2.05 per title for packaging, handling, and postage.

**JAWS OF JUSTICE** (1933) Richard Terry (Jack Parn), Robert Walker, Ruth Sullivan, Lela McKee. An old timer is murdered after discovering a lost gold mine. His body thrown to the bottom of a ravine. A Mountie, aided by the old timer's daughter and a strange mute boy tries to track down the killer and find the location of the secret mine. The villain dies in a really cool way. The first Kazan film. 16mm. FH63

**A WOMAN CONDEMNED** (1934) Richard Henningway, Lola Lema, Claude Bell, Jason Roberts, Melba Auer. A famed singer disappears from sight, then ends up murdered—shock! A mysterious blonde is blamed for the slaying, but an ace reporter sets out to prove her innocence. The trail leads to a creepy sanatorium run by a weird scientist who has strange ideas about "brain surgery." 16mm. FH64

**SECRETS OF CHINATOWN** (1935) Nick Stuart, Lucy Browne, Ray Lawrence. An Oriental mania baffles police with murders and drug trafficking. A detective, called in to help, discovers a mystic cult and witnesses a white woman materializing from a stone idol. *Secrets of Chinatown* is filled with lurid Chinese, secret panels, bizarre sets, etc. Cheap, but a Forgotten Horrors must. From 16mm. FH65

**THE DEVIL'S DAUGHTER** (1939) Nina McKinney, Ida James, Jack Carter, Hester Harrington. Two sisters, one good, one evil (she practices witchcraft) clash over the rights to an aging Japanese ancestor. The good sister is soon drugged and subjected to a blood dance ritual. The bad sister rebels, the death incantation over her! Will the good sister be saved? This all-black thriller is included in the upcoming edition of *Forgotten Horrors* (1937-1943). Remastered from 16mm. FH66

## MARTIAL ARTS

**TIGER FORCE** (1975) Chen Xing, Lotus Key, Cheng Lee. Lots of hard-hitting martial arts action in this Japanese action thriller. A tough undercover agent—also an expert in martial arts—is called in to solve a kidnapping and bust up an illegal drug ring. Color. 16mm. KF10

**BRUCE LEE'S DEADLY KUNG FU** (1976) Bruce Li, Wang Chia Te, Cheng Kuei. Bruce and his pal are on the lam from renegade Kung Fu students in San Francisco's Chinatown. However, he seems to have no problem beating up five or six of them at a time whenever he gets cornered. TONS of Kung Fu action. Color. 16mm. KF11

**FISTS LIKE LEE** (1978) aka *THE CHINESE MACK* Lao Chen, Ling Kuei Xing. There are the usual zillion fight scenes in this obscure Kung Fu thriller. However, the story line has the novel twist of having the hero slowing changing into a bad guy. The final clash between two brothers (who don't know they are brothers) is quite memorable. Rated R for nudity and violence. Color. scope, from 35mm. KF12

**HARD AS A DRAGON** (1979) Raymond Lui, Suu Chi Ying. A domestic martial arts expert (mexico) comes with a gang of thugs when he defends a helpless man the gang is after. After several action-packed run-ins, the gang gets him framed for murder! The climactic fight has to be one of the best in Kung Fu film history, rivaling even some of Bruce Lee's famous fights. Color, scope, from 35mm. KF13



## JUVENILE SCHLOCK

**ONE WAY TICKET TO HELL** (1956) Barbara Meris, Robert Sherry, Joe Popovich. A wayward babe finds herself hooked up with a drug-using motorcycle gang. She ends up selling dope for "Mr. Big." When the cops close in, she heads for Mexico but is overtaken by the horror of withdrawal symptoms. Cheap, but engrossing. 16mm. JS48

**THAT NAUGHTY GIRL** (1958) Bridget Bardot, Mascha Auer, Françoise Fabian. Fun JD sex comedy with BB as a sexy daughter of a night club owner. BB is shipped off to boarding school when Dad's club is raided. She later finds herself involved with counterteasers and the secret service. Upgraded from a nice color 16mm print. JS13

**THE CHEATERS** (1963) Pascale Patte, Andrea Parley, Lisant Terpet, Dennis Varney, Jacques Charrier. This is a very rare beer JD title not commonly available anywhere. It's a manager on the loose again, with a college student becoming involved with a bunch of fest-fest delinquents. A must for all JD collectors. From 16mm. JS44

**A SWINGIN' SUMMER** (1965) James Stacy, William Wellman, Jr., Quinn O'Hara. A group of ambitious teens take over a resort and try to turn it into a "hot spot." They have a bunch of well-known rock and roll acts, including a pre-fame Gary Lewis and the Playboys. Typical, fun mid '60s juvenile schlock. Technicolor 35mm. JS47

## ACTION-ADVENTURE

NOTE: All Action-Adventure titles are just \$12.95 (unless otherwise noted); plus \$2.05 per title for packaging, handling, and postage.

**NOW OR NEVER** (1935) Dick Talmadge, Janet Chandler, Robert Walker, Ed Davis. A group of gangsters are after some valuable jewels. Dick tries to help the owner (his look-a-like, also played by Dick) help foil the thieves. The plan backfires, though, and the crooks and of with the jewels. Before he knows it, Dick's arrested for murdering his double! Who's the real killer? From 16mm. AA23

**BORN TO FIGHT** (1936) Frankie Darro, Kane Richmond, Jack LaRue, Frances Grant. Kane, a boxer, is forced to defend himself when confronted by a mobster for not taking a dive. The mobster ends up dead. While in hiding, Kane takes on an aspiring young fighter and helps him start his career - until the mob catches on. 16mm. AA26

**TWO MINUTES TO PLAY** (1936) Victory, Herman Srix, Eddie Nugent, Jeanne Marrel, Betty Compson, Duncan Renaldo, Grady Sutton. Herman and Eddie, both college football studs, vie for Betty's affections in this lively sports action picture from Sam Katzman's Victory Pictures. The big game finale is great fun. From 16mm. AA25

**NIGHT RIDE** (1937) Julian Velley, Jimmy Hanley, Wally Patch, Joan Ponsford. Two truck drivers are fired because of the spoiled brat daughter of the company owner. They start up their own truck line but are put to the test when they take sabotage from unscrupulous competitors while trying to help save trapped miners in a life-and-death race against time. This is really a pretty good movie. 35mm. AA27

**THE SHOOT** (1964) Lex Barker, Ralf Weller, Maria Varant, Rita Battaglia. Directed by Robert Siodmak. A notorious bandit kidnaps Lex's friend. Later the same villain burns down a farmhouse, and carries away the farmer's daughter. Lex and his partner put their lives in danger as they join in the pursuit. Very exciting! Color-16mm. AA27



## SPYS-ESPIONAGE-INTRIGUE

**DIPLOMATIC PASSPORT** (1954) Paul Carpenter, Marsha Hunt, Henry Oscar, Honor Blackman. An interesting British intrigue thriller about a gang of smugglers in Paris. An American diplomat's car is used for their jewel smuggling schemes. From 16mm. SP43

**THE BLACK CHAPEL** (1963) Dawn Addams, Peter Van Eyck, Gino Cervi. Tense, true WW2 intrigue thriller about journalist Van Eyck who is given anti-Hitler documents by ruthless German officers. His liaison is an agent in Rome. However, he soon discovers the agent has been murdered! Good cast. Recommended. 16mm. SP44

**PASSWORD: KILL AGENT GORDON** (1966) Roger Browne, Helga Liné, Frank Rossel, Michel Rivers. An arms smuggling ring plans a huge shipment of arms to the Viet Cong. A tough CIA agent is called in to quash the deal. His adventures lead him across two continents. Lots of action in this OK spy thriller. Color. 16mm. SP46

**SO DARLING SO DEADLY** (1967) Tony Karda, Brad Harris, Barbara Frey. Another Great Karda-Harris team-up. This time the boys are a couple of slick investigators hired to stop the mysterious "Golden Dragon" from getting possession of a laser death ray! Plenty of great action scenes. Highly recommended. Color. 16mm. SP48

**QSS 117: DOUBLE AGENT** (1969) John Gavin, Curt Jurgens, Margaret Lee. Gavin plays a slick secret agent who has his face surgically altered to resemble a notorious killer. He is arrested by the police, but soon after a secret crime organization (headed by Jurgens) breaks him out and hires him to perform a key assassination. A very good, action-packed spy thriller. Color. from 16mm. SP47

## MYSTERY-SUSPENSE-FILM NOIR

NOTE: All Mystery-Suspense titles are just \$12.95 (unless otherwise noted); plus \$2.05 per title for packaging, handling, and postage.

**THE LAST MILE** (1962) Preston Foster, Howard Phillips, George E. Stone, Neil Madison, Paul Fix. A terrific cast makes this B crime epic a real winner. A man is falsely convicted of murdering his business partner during a gas station holdup and sentenced to die. Right before his execution, a death row killer takes over the cellblock, causing a tense standoff with armed guards. Recommended. From 16mm. M301

**POSTAL INSPECTOR** (1936) Bela Lugosi, Ricardo Cortez, Patricia Ellis. Upgraded! Our new video master is from a 35mm nitrate print and looks far better than our old master. There are a few spillover spots, but overall this is a huge improvement. Bela is a gangster who puts a \$3,000,000 holdup! Cortez is the German who tracks him down. The climax features a boat chase through a flooded city. 35mm. M302

**WIVES UNDER SUSPICION** (1937) Universal, Warren William, William Lendigan, Gail Patrick, Ralph Morgan, Constance Moore. A slick little Universal crime film. William is the hard-headed DA who will stop at nothing to get a conviction on accused murderer Morgan. Then he finds himself tempted to commit the same crime. 16mm. M303



**SPECIAL AGENT K-7** (1937) Walter McGrath, Irving Pichel, Quenne Smith, Donald Reed. A fine poverty row thriller. Agent K-7 finds himself knee-deep in a murder mystery at a posh nightclub run by a mobster. Pichel is great as the smooth-talking lawyer with gangland ties. Who does K? Lots of guys in cool suits, gorgeous dames, and gangland petting. There's even a riffy musical number. 16mm. M304

**FEMALE FUGITIVE** (1938) Evelyn Vacker, Craig Reynolds, Reed Hadley, John Kelly. A woman is shocked when she discovers her husband is the head of a truck-hijacking ring. When he forces her to drive their getaway car, she finds herself wanted by the police, too. An OK Monogram crime thriller with a pretty good cast. 16mm. M305

**EYES IN THE NIGHT** (1942) Edward Arnold, Donna Reed, Ann Harding, Stanley Ridges, Mantel Mantel, Reginald Denny, Allen Jenkins. A first rate MGM whodunk with a top cast. Arnold plays a blind, yet only detective who is brought in to solve a horrible murder with the help of his extraordinary seeing-eye dog. He finds himself between two leading females, but eventually the trail leads to a ring of spies. Director Fred Zinnemann's first feature and it's a good one. Interesting to see Reed as a vicious spoiled brat. A must, of course, for all Mantel Mantel completists. Recommended. 16mm. M306

**A MAN ABOUT THE HOUSE** (1947) Kieron Moore, Margaret Johnson. Outrage Gray. Intriguing thriller about two English spies who inherit a villa in Italy. Before you know it, their handyman/lover is plotting their murders. Upgraded from a nice 16mm print. M307

**CASE OF THE MISSING HEIRESS** (1949) Valentine Dymal, Julie Lang, Philip Leaver, Hugh Griffith, Peter Drury. Almost a horror film. An heiress suddenly vanishes. A detective comes to the former mansion of the missing heiress's wheel-chair-ridden uncle to discover the secret behind the disappearance. This dark house thriller is very spooky with lots of dim, creepy scenes. Recommended. 16mm. M307

**THE LIE** (1954) Lee Bowman, Ramsey Ames, Eva Probst, Harold Morasch. A guy goes out drinking with his buddies. When he wakes up the next morning, he finds a man dead on his apartment floor—shot to death. He goes on trial for murder, but his pals get on the stand and he about his whereabouts the night of the murder. Why? What is the truth behind this sinister conspiracy? A nifty mystery. 16mm. M308

**CONFESS DR. CORDA** (1961) Hardy Kruger, Elizabeth Muller. A renouncing young doctor plans a rendezvous with a beautiful girl at a park bench near a remote wooded area. When he arrives, he finds her battered body lying next to a stream—murdered! He then finds himself to be the prime suspect. Who's the real killer? Not bad. 16mm. M309

**PANIC** (1963) Joanne Gray, Deyan Lovell, Glynn Houston. A cool movie. A London jewelry exchange is robbed. The exchange owner is shot, and his secretary knocked out. When she comes to, she finds herself with a dead boss and no memory. She wanders about the city in a state of amnesia-driven fear while the thieves plan to bump her off. The use of light and shadows is superb. Recommended. 16mm. M310

**THE RIP-OFF** (1977) Lee Van Cleef, Karen Black, Robert Alda, Edward Albert, Lorne Stander. This obscure Van Cleef crime thriller is about a colorful gang of hoodlums looking for last, easy bucks. Things get heavy when they try to pull off a \$8,000,000 heist! Color. 16mm. M311



# the NEWS HOUND

The Hound momentarily thaws his paws to bring you chilling chatter about upcoming media mystery and horror for this winter, spring and beyond...

## Put The Blame On Game, Boy

Feature films based on video games are becoming as common in movie theaters as sticky floors. Anyone who's ever sat through either of the MORTAL KOMBAT movies can tell you this subgenre has the potential for inflicting some serious sensory damage.

Some upcoming examples look rather more promising, however. This summer's TOMB RAIDER (Paramount) stars Angelina Jolie as cyber-babe adventurer Lara Croft, a distaff Indiana Jones with increased firepower and pectorals. Jon Voight (Angelina's dad) and Iain Glen (SILENT SCREAM) costar in this massive production, which was shot in England and various exotic locales by Simon West, director of THE GENERAL'S DAUGHTER and designated helmer of the planned feature version of THE PRISONER. Another summer release based on a high-profile game is FINAL FANTASY: THE SPIRITS WITHIN (TriStar), an astonishingly realistic computer-animated sci-fi adventure from Japan. Alec Baldwin, Donald Sutherland, and Steve Buscemi provide the voices in this post-apocalyptic drama set in 2065.

Other upcoming features based on video games include two horror titles: RESIDENT EVIL: GROUND ZERO, a zombies-in-the-house killfest directed by Paul Anderson, and the Wes Craven feature DARK WONDERLAND (Dimension), based on the new cybergame American McGee's Alice, a sinister variation on *Alice in Wonderland*.

Though it's not based on a game, the lush-looking French production BROTHERHOOD OF THE WOLVES from Christophe Gans (CRYING FREEMAN) is an action/horror hybrid with game-influenced battle scenes. It tells the fact-based tale of the search for the legendary Beast of Govaudan—a killer Bigfoot/werewolf that roamed 18th-century France. Martial arts whiz Marc Dacascos (star of THE CROW teleseries) provides the action, and the Jim Henson Creature Shop provides the monster.

## Theatrical Thrills

Coming to theaters in March is the extremely odd comedy/fantasy MONKEY-BONE (20th Century Fox), a live-action/animation combo from director Henry Selick, starring Brendan Fraser as a comatose cartoonist trapped in his own toon world. Also arriving in April is the sci-fi thriller IMPOSTOR (Dimension), a Phillip

K. Dick adaptation starring Gary Sinise and helmed by Gary Fleder. Screen Gems' vampire thriller THE FORSAKEN also debuts in April, starring Brendan Fehr of TV's ROSWELL as a 20-something Van Helsing type. ("These are the living dead, dudes")

In May, the ever-busy Brendan Fraser is back among the sand dunes as adventurer Rick O'Connell in THE MUMMY RETURNS, Universal's sequel to their smash hit of 1999. Other returning cast members include Rachel Weisz, John Hannah, and Arnold Vosloo as the resurrected Im Ho Tep. Added to the mix is a new villain, The Scorpion King, portrayed by professional wrestler Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson. But it's actually Im-Ho-Tep's scantily clad squeeze, Princess



Following their recent turn in THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES, Matt Frewer and Kenneth Welsh return as Sherlock Holmes and Dr. John H. Watson in a new television version of THE SIGN OF FOUR, featuring Sophie Lorain as Mary Morstan and Marcel Jeannin as Thaddeus Sholto.

Anck-Su-Namun (Patricia Velasquez), who's the main villain of the piece

Also arriving in cinemas in May are director John McTiernan's remake of ROLLERBALL (MGM), starring Chris Klein in the James Caan role, and the animated DreamWorks feature SHREK, a monstrously comic fairy tale featuring the voices of Mike Myers, Eddie Murphy, and John Lithgow.

## Future Features

The popcorn fodder starts hitting cinemas with a vengeance in June, with the aforementioned actioner TOMB RAIDER, Disney's animated ATLANTIS: THE LOST EMPIRE (a rare nonmusical cartoon feature), and the quite determinedly bizarre HOUSE OF 1000 CORPSES (Universal), a tribute to slasher films of the seventies by writer/director/rocker Rob Zombie. Also arriving in June is A.I. (Warner Bros.), the Kubrick sci-fi project adopted by Steven Spielberg. Haley Joel Osment (a perfect paring?) stars as a robot who, in true Pinocchio fashion, wants to become a real boy. Coming later this Summer are JURASSIC PARK 3 (Universal), PLANET OF THE APES (Fox), John Carpenter's GHOSTS OF MARS (Screen Gems), and JASON X (New Line), which sends the FRIDAY THE 13TH villain on a futuristic outer-space slashing spree.

Anne Rice has completed a screenplay based on her novel *The Withering Hour*, the first installment in her Mayfair Witches saga. Christopher Rice, the 22-year-old, blonde, gay son of the author (of a series of books about blonde, gay vampires), was mentioned as her possible collaborator on the so far unsold script, but subsequent published reports don't name him as cowriter. The young Rice is a novelist in his own right, having authored the gay-themed suspense novel *A Density of Souls*. For more information about Christopher Rice, your faithful Hound directs your attention to [www.densityofsouls.com](http://www.densityofsouls.com).

## Deja Views

DreamWorks and Warner Bros. are co-producing a new film version of H.G. Wells' classic fantasy novel *The Time Machine*. Simon Wells, director of THE PRINCE OF EGYPT and other high-profile animated features, is an apt choice to head this live-action production, being that he is Wells' great grandson. Aussie actor Guy Pearce takes the lead role of the Time Traveler, and Jeremy Irons plays a key supporting role. The adaptation was written by John Logan, co-scripter of Ridley Scott's GLADIATOR and the next STAR TREK movie.

And speaking of the new TREK—Paramount begins production sometime this year on the lucky-even-numbered STAR TREK 10. Jonathan "Commander Riker" Frakes, director of the last two entries, again takes the helm. Fans should be heartened by the choice of John Logan as screenwriter, a fresh face to the franchise but a lifelong TREK fan. STAR TREK 10 is scheduled for release in 2002.

Continued on page 17





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# AIN'T LIFE A BEACH?

by John F. Black

The ever-popular AIP Beach Party series has languished for decades in badly-faded, poorly panned-and-scanned television prints. Joyously, MGM has released DVDs that restore four of them to their original luster. The first, *BEACH PARTY* (1963), introduces many of the cast members who would reappear in subsequent installments, particularly Frankie Avalon, Annette Funicello, Jody McCrea, John Ashley, Harvey Lembeck, and Candy Johnson, whose frantically frugging femme fatale provides a Charlotte Greenwood for the go-go generation.

What better way to enter their world than through the eyes of a voyeur? Professor Robert Sutwell (Bob Cummings) is a bearded academic surreptitiously photographing and audio-recording the teenagers for a proposed book, although his bemused assistant, Marianne (Dorothy Malone), suspects him of employing scholastic credentials to justify participating in their adolescent mating rituals.

The on-again, off-again romance between Frankie (Avalon) and Dolores (Funicello) affords Sutwell the opportunity to initiate an age-spanning friendship with Dolores. Cummings provides a marvelous fuddy-duddy foil for the hip antics of the teens. The professor and his research subjects are eventually united by a common foe: Eric Von Zipper (Harvey Lembeck) and his ragtag pack of black-leather-jacketed bikers, who attempt to take over the beach. The show climaxes with a tried-and-true pie fight.

The series' third entry, *BIKINI BEACH* (1964), finds the teens sharing the shoreline with vacationing British pop singer Potato Bug (Avalon, performing double-duty). Greedy developer Harvey Huntington Honeywagon (Keenan Wynn) launches a campaign to rid beaches of surfers, dragsters, motorcycle bums, and other undesirables. Eric Von Zipper offers his "support" to expel the surfers, but the screenplay is hardly a sociological study of unrest between rival peer groups.

Avalon's dual performance is an unexpected delight. Basically enacting himself as Frankie, Avalon stretches admirably while deftly lampooning Potato Bug's musical excesses. The latter role offers an amusing dig at the British Invasion superstars whose newfound stateside popularity had pipelined American surf music from the charts.

Frankie now calls his girlfriend Dee Dee, but that intimacy doesn't signal a

progression in their relationship. They're still subscribing to Rock Hudson/Doris Day sexual politics, with Dee Dee feigning interest in Potato Bug when their romance hits the rocks. Avalon's best scene involves Frankie impersonating the English rocker, a sleight of hand that enables the actor to further parody his own Potato Bug caricature. That sequence is the sublime highlight of a production that descends to a mind-numbing drag race/car chase/bar fight at its climax.

Making the transition from the previous entry to *PAJAMA PARTY* (1964) is like entering a parallel universe. Avalon briefly appears as a Martian plotting an invasion of earth with fellow Martian Don Rickles. He commands Go Go (Tommy Kirk) to infiltrate the terrestrials and prepare them to be conquered. Meanwhile, Connie (Annette Funicello) realizes that she isn't getting what she wants from boyfriend Big Lunk (Jody McCrea). His Aunt Wendy (Elsa Lanchester) is much more openly admiring of beautiful young women. A genuine eccentric, Aunt Wendy is charmed by the visiting Martian's surprising lack of guile and good-naturedly renames him "George."

There's also a running subplot involving con-  
 -niving con J. Sinister  
 Hulk's (Jesse White)  
 plan to steal Aunt  
 Wendy's putative  
 fortune. (The old  
 dame owns a  
 store managed  
 by special guest  
 star Dorothy La-  
 mour, minus her  
 famous sarong.)  
 Mismatched sub-  
 ordinates

Chief Rotten Eagle (Buster Keaton) and Helga (Bobbi Shaw) search her mansion while the teenagers throw the titular wing-ding. Peace reigns when Go Go persuades the Martian braintrust to shelve their expansion agenda.

With Avalon relegated to cameo status, Kirk adroitly assumes center stage. His character's beguiling unacquaintance with human customs reminds one of David Love's performance in Tom Graeff's *TEENAGERS FROM OUTER SPACE* (1959). Both players imbue their respective roles with an ingenuous sincerity that makes their acceptance by earthly contemporaries credible, despite their outward peculiarities. Kirk and Love may have drawn from their own experiences as gay men to inform those portrayals. The film still contains the expected motorcycle chases and pulsating dance sequences, but there's a bit of freshness to be found as well.

The series' penultimate effort, *HOW TO STUFF A WILD BIKINI* (1965), injects a further supernatural element into the festivities. Stationed in the South Seas naval reserve, Frankie enlists the local witch doctor, Bwana (Buster Keaton), to help him maintain his long-distance relationship with Dee Dee. Bwana conjures up a seeing-eye pelican (Pete) to guard Dee Dee, in addition to materializing the scarlet-tressed temptress Cassandra (Beverly Adams) to distract the Malibu hunks. Unforeseeably, a fast-track advertising executive named Ricky (Dwayne Hickman, the many-loved Dobie Gillis himself) remains impervious to her flashy charms, and becomes the latest m a s - c u l i n e

Continued  
 on page 19





## THE NEWS HOUND

Continued from page 14

### Updates Aplenty

As first mentioned by The Hound over a year ago, Warner Bros. has plans for not one but two new BATMAN films. Darren Aronofsky has reportedly been signed to direct BATMAN YEAR ONE, based on Frank Miller's graphic novel series. Miller and Aronofsky are collaborating on the script, which concerns the formative years of Batman and Commissioner Gordon. No start date or casting information has been announced, but there are rumors that Paul Newman has been asked to appear as an aging Bruce Wayne, presumably in a framing sequence. Warner's other Bat-project is BATMAN BEYOND, a live-action version of WB's futuristic animated series about the exploits of young Terry McGinnis, who dons a high-tech cape and cowl as the apprentice of a retired Bruce Wayne. Boaz Yakin has been cited as director on that one.

The cast of Columbia's web-slinger saga is set, and SPIDER-MAN is now in production, with director Sam Raimi at the helm. Star Tobey Maguire is joined by Kirsten Dunst as girlfriend Mary Jane Watson, J.K. Simmons as boss J. Jonah Jameson, Cliff Robertson and Rosemary Harris as Uncle Ben and Aunt May, and Willem Dafoe as Norman Osborn, alias The Green Goblin. Columbia is aiming for a summer 2002 release.

The live-action, big screen version of SCOOBY-DOO is doggedly taking shape at Warner Bros. The cast for the Mystery Machine gang reportedly includes BUFFY's Sarah Michelle Geller as Daphne, Freddy Prinze Jr. as Fred, Matthew Lillard as Snaggy, Linda Cardellini as Velma, and a computer generated Scooby (What, no Scrappy-Doo?) Raja Gosnell directs from a script by John August, the hardworking writer of CHARLIE'S ANGELS and JURASSIC PARK 3, as well as the upcoming Drew Barrymore BARBARELLA remake and Steven Spielberg's Phillip K. Dick adaptation MINORITY REPORT.

### TV Screams

Bringing a close to the role he's played for 13 years, John Thaw returns for his final performance as Chief Inspector Morse in THE REMORSEFUL DAY, a two-hour episode airing on PBS's MYSTERY! on Thursday evening, February 22. Preceding the telefilm is an hour-long documentary, THE LAST MORSE, featuring reminiscences from Thaw, Kevin Whately (Sergeant Lewis), novelist Colin Dexter, and others. MYSTERY! provides other mysterious offerings this spring, including six new installments of SECOND SIGHT, starring Clive Owen as the visually challenged D.C.I. Ross Tanner starting on March 22, and four new episodes of THE MRS. BRADLEY MYSTERIES, starring Dame Diana Rigg, beginning May 10.

Matt Frewer returns as Mr. Sherlock Holmes in the Odyssey cable channel's THE SIGN OF FOUR, a followup feature to last fall's HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES. Once again, Kenneth Welsh is paired with Frewer as Dr. Watson. The two-hour made-for-cable movie pre-

mieres Friday, March 23 at 9.00pm Eastern and Pacific Time. Odyssey plans two more Holmes features to be produced in conjunction with Montreal based Muse Entertainment. Check with your local cable or satellite provider regarding access to the Odyssey Channel.

The Boy of Steel returns (sort of) to the small screen in the WB Network's new fall series SMALLVILLE. The hour-long drama presents the adventures of a teenaged Clark Kent before he decided to don the famed red and blue outfit and bazz the local wheat fields as Superboy. The WB has ordered 13 episodes of the series, starting with a two-hour premiere, from veteran Nickelodeon suppliers Tollin/Robbins Productions. The roles of young Clark, Lana Lang, and Lex Luthor are currently being cast. Superboy was last seen on TV in the syndicated 1988-1992 series that starred John Haymes Newton in its first season and Scarlet Street interviewee Gerard Christopher in its subsequent three seasons.

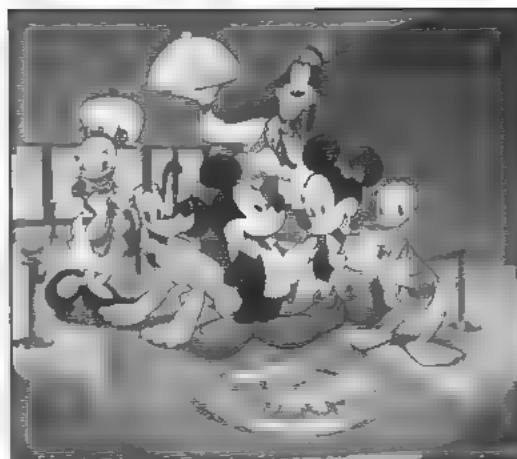
Clarabelle Cow, Professor Ludwig Von Drake, Black Pete, Horace Horsecollar, and Scrooge McDuck are among scores of rarely-seen Disney characters populating DISNEY'S HOUSE OF MOUSE, a new half-hour animated series on ABC. Mickey Mouse is the master of ceremonies for new cartoon shorts featuring unique combinations of classic Disney characters of the past 60 years. HOUSE OF MOUSE airs on Saturdays at 12:30pm Eastern Time, 11:30am Pacific Time.

### The Home Video Vault

Find these terror titles now at your local video emporium: WHAT LIES BENEATH (DreamWorks, VHS rental, DVD \$26.99), URBAN LEGENDS: FINAL CUT (Columbia/TriStar, VHS rental, DVD \$24.95), BLESS THE CHILD (Paramount, VHS rental, DVD \$29.99), HIGHLANDER: ENDGAME (Dimension/BV, DVD \$29.99), THE WATCHER (Universal, DVD \$26.98), LOST SOULS (New Line, DVD \$24.98), and BLAIR WITCH 2: BOOK OF SHADOWS (Artisan, DVD \$24.98). Direct to video from 20th Century Fox is PYTHON, a monster spoof starring Casper (SLEEPY HOLLOW) Van Dien, Robert "Freddy Kruger" Englund, and Wil Wheaton.

Coming in March: the Arnold Schwarzenegger sci-fi actioner THE 6TH DAY (Columbia/TriStar), THE CROW SALVATION (Dimension/BV), CHARLIE'S ANGELS (Columbia/TriStar), RED PLANET (Warner), and a two-disc set of the cable miniseries FRANK HERBERT'S DUNE (Artisan). THE MUMMY: ULTIMATE EDITION double-disc DVD set (Universal, \$29.98) is available in April, as is M. Night Shyamalan's UNBREAKABLE (Touchstone/BV), DRACULA 2000 (Dimension), DUNGEONS & DRAGONS (New Line), and SHADOW OF THE VAMPIRE (Lion's Gate) are tentatively scheduled for release in May.

Lots of mystery and horror are newly available from the genre specialists at Anchor Bay Entertainment. The Agatha



Mickey Mouse poses with pals Daisy Duck, Pluto, Goofy, Minnie Mouse, and Donald Duck outside the HOUSE OF MOUSE, home of Disney's new Saturday morning cartoon show.

Christie adaptations ENDLESS NIGHT, DEATH ON THE NILE, and EVIL UNDER THE SUN can be had on VHS (\$9.98 each) and DVD (\$24.98). Severed heads abound in HORROR HOSPITAL, the 1973 Michael Gough gorefest from the folks at Hallmark (the sleazy British producers, not the greeting card company), which is available on widescreen VHS for \$9.99, as are INSEMINOID (aka HORROR PLANET, 1981), TOWER OF EVIL (aka HORROR ON SNAPE ISLAND, 1972), and the original 1994 Danish version of NIGHTWATCH from director Ole Bornedal.

An alert for those Scarlet Streeters who skip past the trailers: the collector's edition DVD of Universal's MEET THE PARENTS includes a sneak-preview trailer for THE MUMMY RETURNS.

Watch for the BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER Season One DVD boxed set from Fox Home Video this spring.

### Stage And Scream

The CB Stage company of Pennsylvania is staging a rare production of John L. Balderston's theatrical adaptation of FRANKENSTEIN in March. The phenomenal 1920s Broadway success of his DRACULA adaptation led to Balderston's creation of a FRANKENSTEIN play. Once DRACULA became a Universal Pictures smash, Balderston's FRANKENSTEIN was purchased sight unseen for James Whale's famous 1931 film version, but was never staged on Broadway. For more info on this production, drop by the CB Stage website at <http://members.nbci.com/frankenstage/>.

Jack Finney's novel Time and Again had its Off-Broadway debut as a stage musical this past January 30 at New York's City Center. The limited engagement ran through February 18 and quickly sold out prior to opening. David McCallum starred in this Manhattan Theatre Club presentation which was adapted by Jack Viertel (originator of the revue SMOKEY JOE'S CAFE), with music and lyrics by Walter E. Kennon. Additional material for the book is credited to James Hart, screenwriter of

Continued on page 18



Say it ain't so! Puzzle-playing, beer-swilling Inspector Morse (John Thaw, pictured with Kevin Whately as Sergeant Lewis, grapples with death and loses in **THE REMORSEFUL DAY**.

#### THE NEWSHOUND

*Continued from page 17*

**BRAM STOKER'S DRACULA.** Part historical novel, part love story, *Time and Again* concerns a modern day New York illustrator who time travels to the Manhattan of 1882. Susan H. Schulman first staged the musical in San Diego in 1995—coincidentally, the year of Finney's death and of the publication of his sequel novel, *From Time to Time*. Feature film adaptations of *Time and Again* have long been planned but never materialized; Finney's *The Body Snatchers* has, of course, been filmed several times.

Flower Redrum Song? Billboard reports that Stephen King is writing a musical play in collaboration with singer/songwriter John Mellencamp. The as-yet-untitled ghost story is an intergenerational tale about a man and his sons, who visit a rural cabin haunted by their ancestors. The story is based on an idea brought to King by Mellencamp who is penning songs for the piece in a wide variety of styles. The Broadway musical adaptation of King's *Carrie* opened in 1988 and closed after five performances.

*Scarlet Street*'s own Kevin G. Shinnick, who in his other incarnation is a talented actor and director, is staging a production of the Mary Haynes play **THE CRIMSON THREAD** at The Wings Theater in New York's Greenwich Village from March 15 through April 21, 2001. For more information, call 212-627-2960 or email The Wings Theater at [jefferycorrick@yahoo.com](mailto:jefferycorrick@yahoo.com).

#### Perilous Publications

*Planet Of The Apes Revisited*, the long-awaited book detailing the history of

20th Century Fox's famed sci-fi film series, is finally set for publication. The illustrated hardcover volume, featuring a forward by God... uh, Charlton Heston, was written by Joe Russo and Larry Landsman with Ed Gross. Russo is a lifelong fan of the series, and has spent over 10 years conducting interviews and collecting memorabilia in preparation for the book. St. Martin's Press will publish *Planet Of The Apes Revisited* in July to coincide with the theatrical release of Fox's APES remake.

*Scarlet Street*'s former COMICS CORNER columnist Buddy Scaleria has been hired on for some issues of Marvel Comics' DEADPOOL series. Deadpool is a mysterious masked mercenary who has super-healing powers (similar to X-MEN's Wolverine) and an entertainingly wise-assed attitude (similarly to Buddy).

**The News Hound's Maulbag** Chuck Duncan of Baltimore emailed The Hound to quiz him about the mention in Issue #39 of an impending DVD release of E.T. THE EX-

TRA-TERRESTRIAL. Back in April of 2000, internet reports stated that a first-quarter 2001 release of E.T. was "under discussion" at Universal, since then, there has been no official word. The Hound regrets jumping the gun.

\*\*\*

Gone, but never to be forgotten: Cinefantastique publisher Frederick S. Clarke, film and theater critic Vincent Canby; silent film composer and organist Lee Erwin; art director Burr Smidt; set decorator Emile Kuri; authors Alan Betrock and L. Sprague de Camp; TV pioneer Steve Allen; screenwriters Edward Anhalt, R. Wright Campbell, Julius J. Epstein, Ring Lardner Jr., and Larry Rhine; film editor Sam O'Steen; producer Bud Kieser, director Sidney Salchow; producer/directors Stanley Kramer and Howard W. Koch; and actors Billy Barty, Michael Cuccione, Val Dufour, David Dukes, Richard Farnsworth, Shelagh Fraser, Rick Jason, Werner Klemperer, Julie London, Grace McDonald, John Milford, Richard Mulligan, Patricia Owens, Jean Peters, Jason Robards Jr., Nick Stewart, Gloria Talbott, Gwen Verdon, Ray Walston, Al Waxman, Marie Windsor, Michael Williams (BBC Radio's Dr. John H. Watson), Sally Mansfield, Rosemary DeCamp, Louis (DARK SHADOWS) Edmonds, Burt Kennedy, Lewis Wilson, and *Scarlet Street* fave (and Issue #17 interviewee) Ann Doran.

Send The Hound your questions, comments and compliments via e-mail to [TheNewsHound@yahoo.com](mailto:TheNewsHound@yahoo.com)



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## AIN'T LIFE A BEACH?

Continued from page 16

Dee Dee's affections. It's nice to know that some things never change.

The established formula for these pictures still provides a fair share of fun, although plot twists are predictable by this juncture. Aside from the obligatory motorcycle chase, humor springs from the reliable melding of cast regulars and celebrity guest stars. The silly goings-on are interspersed with more production numbers than ever. Schtick happens, as the tide of surf music becomes muddled with Tin Pan Alley currents. Practically everyone in sight gets to harmonize. Hell, even Eric Von Zipper and his motorbikn' minions perform two ensemble pieces—whether we want them or not.

Considered together, the films depict a utopia devoid of parental influence in which naked flesh is always on parade, but seldom exploited. It's a singular universe defined by rear-projected ocean waves and zany sound effects. With supporting casts featuring such accomplished farceurs as Rickles, Lamour, Wynn, Morey Amsterdam, and Mickey Rooney, and further peppered with sly comic turns by monstrous icons Vincent Price and Boris Karloff (Peter Lorre pops up pop-eyes and all in 1964's **MUSCLE BEACH PARTY**, still awaiting release) and actors Timothy Carey, Brian Donlevy, and Elizabeth Montgomery, there's a refreshing absence of adult role models to solemnify the activities.

The spanking, sparkling new DVD transfers remind us why the series became popular enough to spawn numer-

ous major studio copycat efforts. The screen is awash with eye-popping color, a necessary ingredient for appreciating this candy-coated world. The discs offer both standard and wide-screen presentations, but the 2:35:1 aspect ratio is far preferable for showcasing en masse reaction shots and strategically-placed offbeat props. In fact, the letterboxing reveals the careful posing of most of the group shots. The source materials are in exemplary condition, betraying only occasional print scratches or stray markings. Theatrical trailers have been included for each title.

So join Frankie and Annette (whatever her name of the moment) as they prove once again that life is a beach!

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## Scarlet Street's DVD Review

**AN EVENING WITH  
SHERLOCK HOLMES**  
Focusfilm Entertainment  
\$69.95

Focusfilm Entertainment put an enticing little blurb on the back of their box set, **AN EVENING WITH SHERLOCK HOLMES**. It reads: "The enclosed four DVD titles were miraculously restored from the only known surviving prints, which were extremely damaged." Likewise, each of the four discs in this set start with Very-Important-and-Serious-Sounding music and the words "Dedicated to the restoring and preserving of our national and international motion picture heritage." Wow! This is going to be great! I've got to see how my poor old Key Video VHS copies from 12 years ago hold up to this digital marvel!

First, a quick word on the packaging and menu features: each film comes in its own keepcase, with a colorful cover taken either from original one-sheet or lobby-card art, with parts of each cover colorfully reproduced on the front of each DVD. The liner notes are informative and

fairly interesting. After several unskippable company logos, each disc brings up a silent, full-color main menu that is very easily navigable. Each film has 12 chapter stops (seven for **TERROR BY NIGHT**, because it's shorter), that seem to hit about every 10 minutes rather than being keyed to what's happening in the film; an Associated Artists rerelease trailer (except for **WOMAN IN GREEN**, which was "recreated"—and looks it); a photo gallery (which consists of several questionably cropped images from poster art, lobby cards, or publicity stills), and seven or eight radio shows.

**SHERLOCK HOLMES AND THE SECRET WEAPON** (1942) begins with a window-boxed Universal logo that is washed out and grainy. Then begins a tradition that remains throughout this set: rather than seeing "Universal Presents" over the fog followed by the pan up of Basil Rathbone and Nigel Bruce, we start with a full-frame image and then the pan up. On **SECRET WEAPON**, the sound is recorded so low that one might think it was absent entirely. Unfortunately,

the picture matches the sound. It looks as bad as any of the hundreds of other cheap, public domain copies of this film. There is a slight loss of picture on all sides of the DVD, the result of the (obvious) 16mm print used. The film itself is complete except for the elements missing from the credits. "The End. A Universal Picture" is absent between the film's end and the cast credits, and the DVD is also missing the War Bonds

tag that Key Video so nicely kept. This holds true for all the DVD prints.

**THE WOMAN IN GREEN** (1945) reveals what must be the "restored" part of these films: the window-boxed Universal logo is the same on all four films. Although the sound is louder, it is little better than **SECRET WEAPON**. The picture too, is also of the same horrid quality and framed even worse. Significant information is lost on the right side, to the point that entire characters are missing!

**TERROR BY NIGHT** (1946) is the shortest film in the Rathbone/Bruce series, and now, thanks to Focusfilm, it's even shorter! Three scenes are completely missing: the first is a three minute, 15 second scene that begins immediately after Holmes boards the train. This includes the introduction of Dennis Hoey's Inspector Lestrade (including an explanation as to why he's on the train), Dr. Watson, and Alan Mowbray's Major Bleek (a major character to say the least!), plus two other characters! The entire dining car scene (one minute, 23 seconds), in which Holmes receives the threatening letter just before the death of Ronald Carstairs (Geoffrey Steele), is also missing. The final missing scene is Watson's questioning of Professor Kilbane (Frederick Worlock), during which the surly Professor turns the tables and starts accusing Watson, though the second part of this scene, where Holmes interrupts the argument, is present—and now makes no sense at all! The print has the same abominable sound and picture quality as the rest, with the picture loss mostly confined to the bottom of the frame.

**DRESSED TO KILL** (1946) suffers from the same problems as the other three: sound nearly impossible to understand and a picture that is of the worst quality, although the framing seems very near to the Key Video release. Neither the Key Video tape nor the disc have end credits.

Now, you might be saying this set is an overpriced load of garbage—and if you're buying it only for the films, you're right! However, it does have a few things to recommend it. On the **TERROR BY NIGHT** disc, "An Interview with Sir Arthur Conan Doyle" is presented as a supplement. This was reconstructed by Blackhawk films from a Fox Movietone short and sports an introduction by no less than Christopher Morley! It's the only time Doyle was recorded on camera talking about Holmes. The quality is very good (for its age) and the sound is better than on any of the features. Also included in this set are 30 episodes from **THE NEW ADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES** radio show starring Rathbone and Bruce. All are from 1945 and 1946 and sound fine, definitely leaps and bounds over the films. Curiously, at the end of each episode, Watson tells listeners about the following week's program, but, even though this set has many episodes that aired consecutively, they are randomly presented. Each episode features stills taken from the film on that disc, which change about every minute.





A truly strange DVD set, deceptively promoted, with some great supplements you probably won't see on DVD in other collections. . . .

—Jeff Allen

## SISTERS

The Criterion Collection  
\$29.95

There's a fine line between homage and intellectual plagiarism, and Brian De Palma's *SISTERS* (1973) has always divided viewers between those camps. The film is decidedly Hitchcockian in execution, but manages a few clever innovations of its own.

Danielle Breton (Margot Kidder), a transplanted Quebecois modeling in New York, is the surviving half of separated Siamese Twins. Unfortunately, her coping mechanism necessitates periodic "visits" from her homicidally jealous sister Dominique, who represents a guilt-inspiring alter ego akin to Norma Bates of Alfred Hitchcock's *PSYCHO* (1960). "Dominique" brutally butchers Danielle's new lover, Philip Woode (Lisle Wilson), forcing surgeon ex husband Emil Breton (Bill Finley) to clean up the mess.

Investigative reporter Grace Collier (Jennifer Salt) witnesses the crime from her nearby apartment window, a la Hitchcock's *REAR WINDOW* (1954), and attempts to prove that the murder oc-

CHO, exhibits De Palma's modern sensibility as well. The director utilizes such filmmaking techniques as fish-eye lenses, split screen imagery, and intentional visual grain to distort reality to his own specifications. Grace's climactic hallucination sequence contains a potent narrative shift when she is forced to project herself as being Dominique. This transference from the objective to the subjective point of view is a device that would reappear in subsequent De Palma works.

Criterion's DVD accurately displays the director's vision. The fine-quality source print is letterboxed at 1.85:1, properly presenting the split screen compositions and cleverly manipulated film textures. The supplemental offerings are vintage material reproductions, including the inspirational 1966 *Life* magazine article about Russian Siamese Twins, a 1973 interview with De Palma, the original pressbook (but no trailer preview), a bounty of behind-the-scenes photographs, and an insert reproduction of the director's 1973 article about his tempestuous collaboration with composer Bernard Herrmann. The photos reveal that real-life carnival freaks participated in the staging of the Grace/Dominique montage, though many of them aren't discernible in the final edit.

John F. Black

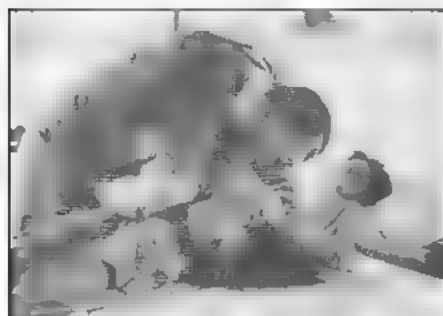


Hash-A-Mo-Tep (Ayesha in Haggard's novel), ruler of the ancient, forgotten kingdom of Kor. Both the novel and the film recount She's ruthless attempts to lure the modern-day descendant of her long-dead lover into the morbid solitude of immortality.

The movie's lively, colorful cast includes Broadway beauty Helen Gahagan (long before her days in Congress) as the mysterious, melancholy queen. Icy and remote rather than smoldering and sensual, Gahagan's Hash-A-Mo-Tep is a heartless femme fatale who nonetheless inspires sympathy and awe. (Even psychiatrist Carl Jung was intrigued by the strange, seductive appeal of Haggard's hardhearted goddess, claiming She represents "man's unconscious ideal of what woman ought to be: an unchanging beauty, a woman of eternal youth and supernatural powers.")

Rising young action star Randolph Scott—who would gain his greatest fame as a star of grim, adult Westerns in the forties and fifties—is splendid as heroic explorer Leo Vincey, the object of Hash-A-Mo-Tep's undying affections. Summoned by his dying uncle (played by Samuel S. Hinds of 1935's *THE RAVEN*), Leo learns of a forbidden, subterranean world visited 500 years ago by a long lost ancestor. After this cryptic prologue, Leo ventures into the uncharted Arctic on a quest to find the glacial land of Kor and discover the secret behind its magical Flame of Eternal Life. He's joined by scientific researcher and family friend Horace Holly (a remarkably restrained Nigel Bruce, without the comic bluster generally associated with his portrayal of Dr. John H. Watson opposite Basil Rathbone's Sherlock Holmes). The expedition also includes Tanya, the daughter of the explorers' greedy, ill-fated guide (Lumsden Hare). A resilient, down-to-earth heroine, Tanya is played by the marvelous Helen Mack, best-remembered for her roles as Hilda in *SON OF KONG* and hooker Molly Malloy in *HIS GIRL FRIDAY* (1940).

KONG composer Max Steiner contributed another bold, majestic score to *SHE*. The costumes, makeup, special effects (still impressive 65 years later), and sets (a blend of Egyptian and art-deco motifs) instill the film with a visual grandeur reminiscent of the silent epics of D.W. Griffith.



## SHE

Kino on Video  
\$24.95

Long before Steven Spielberg brought us the breathtaking exploits of Indy Jones, producer Merian C. Cooper blended elements of mystical fantasy and exotic adventure with the glorious *SHE*.

Based on the popular Victorian novel by British tale-spinner H. Rider Haggard, Cooper's magnificent production of *SHE* was released in 1935, just two years after the moviemaker's undisputed masterpiece of fantastic cinema, *KING KONG* (1933). Though it lacked the stop-motion wonder of Willis O'Brien's ferocious monsters (not to mention the presence of original scream queen Fay Wray), *SHE* proved to be a lavish, heart-racing screen spectacle in its own right. Adapted by KONG scribe Ruth Rose (who also contributed to 1933's *SON OF KONG*, 1935's *THE LAST DAYS OF POMPEII*, and 1949's *MIGHTY JOE YOUNG*), Cooper's stunning production captures the haunting, otherworldly essence of Haggard's 1887 novel.

*SHE* was codirected by Irving Pichel, best known for playing Sandor in *DRACULA'S DAUGHTER* (1936) and directing features ranging from Cooper's thriller *THE MOST DANGEROUS GAME* (1932) to the sci-fi drama *DESTINATION MOON* (1950). Pichel was aided by Lansing C. Holden, whose skill as an art director and production designer helped shape the movie's singular look.

*SHE* refers to "She Who Must Be Obeyed," the 2,000-year-old goddess

curred. Her explorations end disastrously when Emil employs hypnotherapy to compel her to psychologically become Dominique at the point of the surgical disavowment. Grace's search for the "missing" twin has culminated in her fulfilling that very role herself. She is eventually rescued and allowed to recuperate, but the large Raggedy Ann doll beside her bed visually suggests a lingering mental dissociation.

De Palma's *SISTERS*, as well as his *VERTIGO* (1958)—inspired *OBSESSION* (1976), is often scorned by those who brand it a pale Hitchcock imitation. It's important to note that these two seventies productions were created at a time when several Hitchcock masterpieces, including *REAR WINDOW* and *VERTIGO*, had been absent from legal distribution for many years. Consequently, I place De Palma's efforts in the homage category, helping to fill a void that thankfully ended when the master's originals were eventually reissued in the early eighties.

*SISTERS*, although integrating plot elements from *REAR WINDOW* and *PSY-*

(The colossal gates of KONG make an en-core appearance, as does the ubiquitous Noble Johnson, as the chief of some cave-dwelling cannibals.)

Filmmakers have adapted Haggard's strange, exciting, and darkly romantic novel at least seven times—including the lush, lavish 1965 Hammer Films remake that utilized the physical virtues of Ursula Andress, the splendor of Technicolor and the comfortable chemistry of Hammer veterans Peter Cushing, Christopher Lee, and Andre Morell. Still, the finest SHE by far remains Cooper's odd, eerie carefully constructed 1935 classic.

Kino International, which brought a lovingly restored SHE to home video in 1996, recently reissued this unforgettable screen treasure for the DVD market. The disc lacks the cherished extras associated with the flourishing DVD format (no commentary, no documentary, no trailers, no nothing). Collectors, however, are sure to appreciate the sharp, faithful transfer of this black-and-white relic to today's digital technology.

Once again SHE has returned with renewed vigor, rekindling the Flame of Eternal Life for a new age of thrilling and timeless adventure.

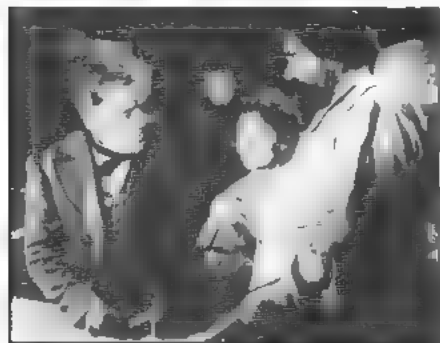
Terry Pace

## CORRIDORS OF BLOOD

Image Entertainment

\$24.99

Forty years ago, old horror (Boris Karloff) and new horror (Christopher Lee) came together in a luridly titled 1962 film that's actually more of a grim historical drama than a horror movie. Originally filmed in 1958, CORRIDORS OF BLOOD tells the story of Dr. Thomas Bolton (Karloff) in the "London of 1840 before the discovery of anesthetics" (as the opening billboard proclaims). This DVD features a very good print of the black-and-white film



and a color menu complete with pictures illustrating each chapter. The movie is divided into 15 chapters, with the movie trailer on Chapter 16. The trailer proclaims CORRIDORS OF BLOOD to be presented in "Nervorama."

CORRIDORS OF BLOOD is full of familiar faces besides Karloff, including Adrienne Corri, Betta St. John, and Finlay Currie, but Christopher Lee as Resurrection Joe is the most memorable supporting player. Lee has only as much dialogue as he does in a Dracula movie—meaning not much! but his presence registers

strongly. Old Dr. Bolton becomes involved with unsavory characters Resurrection Joe and Black Ben (Francis DeWolff) when he attempts to develop a breathable gas to eliminate the terrible pain endured during bone-crunching surgical procedures. An amputation scene involving a little girl is especially uncomfortable viewing, despite its relative subtlety. As Dr. Bolton's experiments go awry, his son Jonathan (Francis Matthews) muses that "Perhaps pain and the knife are inseparable." Meanwhile, the elder Bolton becomes addicted to the narcotic inhalants he is concocting and trying on himself. Just as Vincent Price shoots up LSD in THE TINGLER (1959), Boris Karloff spends a good deal of time inhaling gas in CORRIDORS OF BLOOD.

—Jeff Thompson

## MOONLIGHTING: THE PILOT

Anchor Bay

\$24.98

MOONLIGHTING is a comic, oil and water blend of the down-to-earth, streetwise, and rough-hewn personality of David Addison (Bruce Willis) and upscale, worldly, sophisticated Maddie Hayes (Cybill Shepard). Maddie (the Blue Moon Shampoo girl) has recently been taken to the cleaners by her accounting firm for all of her monetary assets. Among her last remaining holdings, she discovers that she owns a detective agency called City of Angels Investigations, managed by David Addison.

Cleverly created and written by Glenn Gordon Caron and skillfully directed by Robert Butler, MOONLIGHTING offers mystery, romance, intrigue, and offbeat humor. The pilot's plot revolves around a wristwatch owned by a pilot and given to him by his father, who also was a pilot during the Second World War. Not much of a storyline, but wait, it gets better. The watch holds a cryptogram to the whereabouts of a cache of diamonds stolen from the Nazis. Only the pilot knows the true meaning of the message—but, after he's hit and killed by a car, it's left up to Addison to break the code.

Also involved are a blonde, Mohawk-coiffed roughneck, an elderly man, and a lunatic, all searching for the watch. After numerous attempts, Addison finally discovers that the code is a set of coordinates marking the hiding place of the diamonds—a building in Los Angeles topped off by a large clock. The minute hand on the watch points to a quarter to the hour, and Addison deduces that the diamonds are hidden in the number nine.

The dramatic climax to the film is shot high above a busy Los Angeles boulevard, a scene reminiscent of Alfred Hitchcock's Statue of Liberty finale in SABOTEUR (1942). David and the elderly man struggle on a ladder stretching out from the top of a building into thin air. The ladder collapses against the side of the building and the old man is left dangling, clutching the bag of gems, which rips much like saboteur Fry's jacket sleeve in the Hitchcock thriller. Case solved, heist foiled, David

begs Maddie to keep the agency open. Maddie must decide, but hey, this is only a pilot! On the other hand, if the answer wasn't "yes" there would never have been a series!

MOONLIGHTING: THE PILOT is tremendous fun, especially for Bruce Willis



in his first major appearance. The picture reproduction is crisp and clear. Running time is 93 minutes, but despite several popcorn breaks, the film moves quickly. Added features include audio commentary by Bruce Willis and Glenn Gordon Caron, as well as Bruce Willis' actual screen test.

Dan Clayton

## SALOME'S LAST DANCE

Artisan Home Entertainment

\$29.98

The night is November 5th, 1892—Guy Fawkes' Day. The setting is Alfred Taylor's famous brothel just outside of Westminster, discreetly yet conveniently located within easy access of society's most decadently elite. Yet tonight this house of pleasure is devoid of clientele, for Taylor (Stratford Johns) has arranged a special surprise for his friend and favored client, Oscar Wilde (Nickolas Grace). He has transformed his brothel for one night into the court of wicked King Herod for an illegal performance of Wilde's play, *Salome*, put on by Taylor and his staff for a delighted audience of one.

Ken Russell chose for his second of a *carte blanche* three-picture deal with Vestron Pictures (between 1988's LAIR OF THE WHITE WORM and 1989's THE RAINBOW) to adapt Wilde's controversial, once-outlawed biblical satire. Set in motion by Russell's boast that he could make a film of *Salome* for under \$1 million, Russell's agent quickly passed the brag along to Vestron, and it was a done deal. Realizing he couldn't do a full-blown period epic on this budget, Russell pulled the camera back farther than the scope of the art to cast light on the artist. Mixing fact and fiction from Wilde's life, Russell creates a mythic, magical



night which one easily believes could have happened.

Setting the stage for the evening, Taylor (perhaps on behalf of Russell) asks of Wilde (the theatrical audience): "What our production lacks in stagecraft, we hope to make up for in enthusiasm, and any shortcomings in design I know will be compensated for by your fertile imagination." To which the audience replies, "That sounds too much like hard work. I came here to be entertained . . . entertain me!" And we are assured, "As always, I shall do my best!" This is Ken Russell in fine form. From a humble, painted background and nearly one-room location, Russell paints an hallucinatory, visually-dazzling, brilliantly colorful portrait of the artist and his work.

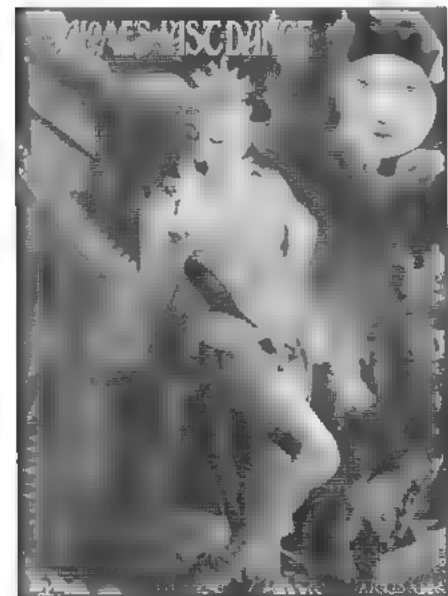
Wilde's play tells the tale of King Herod's (enacted by Stratford Johns Taylor) obsession with Salome (Imogen Milais-Scott) daughter of his wife, Herodias (Glenda Jackson). Herod has imprisoned John the Baptist (Douglas Hodge, in the role of Lord Alfred Douglas, Wilde's lover), with whom Salome has developed an unhealthy obsession—paralleling that of her own stepfather's—but the prophet viciously spurns her advances. She vows, "I will kiss your lips, John the Baptist!" Herod wants Salome to dance for him, and offers the young nymph anything she desires if she'll only do so. Salome agrees, and performs the dance of the seven veils to Herod's delight, after which she demands the head of John the Baptist, in order to kiss his dead lips.

It's not difficult to see why this harshly satirical work was banned by the Lord

(buled as Alfred Russell), the film hits the mark every step of the way. And in a stroke of casting brilliance, Russell introduces Imogen Milais-Scott in the title role. Even up against the formidable cast of veteran actors surrounding her, she steals the show, a feat rendered even more impressive by the revelation that the actress suffers from a rare virus that renders her almost completely blind! It is unfortunate that she has not worked in film since this production.

Artisan's Pioneer Special Edition DVD release presents the film in a beautiful, near-flawless transfer that perfectly preserves the rich color palette of cinematographer Harvey Harrison. The unmatted, full-frame aspect ratio is here actually preferred, as it lends nicely to the "filmed play" feel of the picture. The disc includes an entertaining and informative audio commentary by the ever-jovial and witty director, filled with anecdotes and recollections from the film's production, and on both Russell's and Wilde's careers. Russell shows great sympathy and respect for the author, and seems proud to play a part in bringing a persecuted man's most persecuted (and arguably best) work to a new audience. As Russell notes, Wilde has "just at last been recognized by a statue in Trafalgar Square . . . but it's taken us a century to get over the fact that he was a homosexual, and therefore suspect as an artist." No stranger to (at least critical) persecution himself, Russell has paid a fine tribute here. Full-frame trailers for both this film and *LAIR OF THE WHITE WORM* (1988) are also included as supplements.

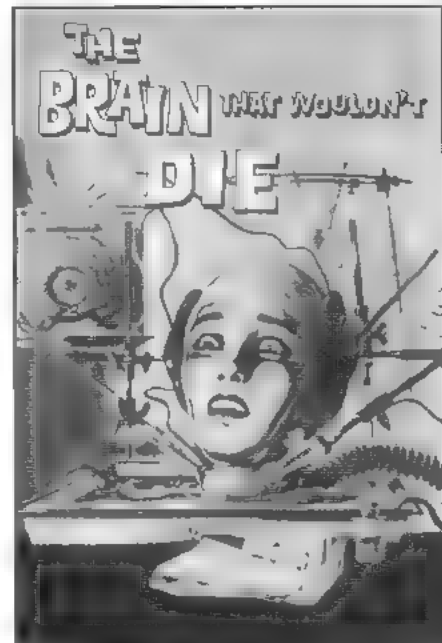
—Tony Strauss



Chamberlain before publication, but it's a pleasure to see it now. And you do, in its entirety (reducing only one exchange in which Herod goes on at length with offers for Salome's dance). With a decidedly sadomasochistic *art nouveau* design, Russell pays a true homage that would have made Wilde proud. Touting a fine cast that includes the director himself

Cortner obviously suffers from delusions of grandeur, judging by the seven-foot-tall pinheaded monstrosity (Eddie Carmel) imprisoned in his laboratory. In a faux existential twist, Jan's head and the monster communicate to terminate their common oppressors. The drama's final act litters the stage with dismembered body parts in what may represent the first American gore film.

Jason Evers employs a negative charisma in the leading role, reminiscent of Ralph Meeker's abrasively cocksure portrayal of Mike Hammer in *KISS ME*



#### THE BRAIN THAT WOULDN'T DIE Synopsis Films

\$24.98

Often considered a cinematic sick joke, *THE BRAIN THAT WOULDN'T DIE* (1959/62) concerns Dr. Bill Cortner (Jason "Herb" Evers) and his opportunistic scheme of transplanting the living head of his decapitated fiancée, Jan (Virginia Leith), onto another female body. He and his deformed assistant, Kurt (Leslie Daniel), preserve her head in a secluded laboratory. Despite a 48-hour time limit, Cortner's leering search for the perfect specimen runs the gamut from a roadside burlesque joint to a Miss Body Beautiful Contest. His wanderings are underscored with belching saxophone riffs that wouldn't pass muster at even the most slapdash Ace Cannon recording session. No one pans out until the dedicated doctor encounters former high school classmate Doris Powell (Adele Lamont), whose employment as a photographers' model belies a concealed facial scar. Cortner's pitch to her suggests the "sincerity" of Jack Cassidy tanked up on martini while reciting T. S. Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," but Doris swallows the bait. She believes that he will surgically remove her scar, and he doesn't mention that her whole head will be discarded as well.

*DEADLY* (1955, Doris recalls that Cortner brutalized a classmate for mocking her deformity, a recollection that paints him as a strong nonconformist. Evers' performance justifies such a revelation, even though we never actually witness him resorting to violence.

Synapse has released a superior DVD transfer of the original uncut version of *THE BRAIN THAT WOULDN'T DIE*. Over the decades, many viewers have had to contend with a heavily censored alternate cut (itself available in MGM's current Midnite Movies series on VHS). The master print bears the usual low-budget hallmarks of visual scratches and occasional speckling, but also offers comparatively strong black-and-white contrasts and a clearer focus than this film is usually afforded. The image is slightly windowboxed to exhibit as much of director Joseph Green's gruesome vision as possible. Supplements include a murky theatrical trailer and several behind-the-scenes stills featuring Eddie Carmel in monster makeup with various female cast members striking cheesecake poses. The pictures neither confirm nor disprove the whispered rumors regarding the existence of yet another alternate edition, one containing a topless scene designed to appeal to adult "art house" theaters.

John F. Black



**HELP!**  
MPI Home Video  
\$24.98

After the somewhat unexpected success of *A HARD DAY'S NIGHT*, director Richard Lester and the Beatles reteamed for this more expensive and almost equally successful followup, which is all too often dismissed as a lesser film. Two key points are generally overlooked by *HELP!*'s detractors. In the first place, Lester and the lads were in a kind of lose-lose position. Make another movie too much like *A HARD DAY'S NIGHT* and they would be trounced as one-trick ponies. Make something too different and it would inevitably be held up as an example of how the first film was a fluke. To add to the mix was the scrupulously guarded public image that had been crafted for the Beatles. They had to remain cheeky, but not threatening. They had to be sexy, but essentially sexless.

Looked at in this light, it's surprising that 1965's *HELP!* takes the risks it does, even if those risks are carefully couched in an absurd *GOON SHOW* type of plot and are relatively tentative. One of the most successful aspects of the film's approach is that it suggests that the Beatles as they are presented are utterly fictional creations. How else—without getting into some subtexts that would have caused Beatles manager Brian Epstein apoplexy had he thought of them—explain why these four guys only appear to live in separate houses, but, in reality (the reality of the film), have front doors that lead to one communal room in which they all sleep? Surely, these are not meant to be taken as real people in any way. This is further evidenced by the inclusion of two old ladies who watch them retire to their communal dwelling and rhapsodize over their naturalness ("... and still the same as they was before they was"). Within such a stylized framework, *HELP!* could then safely touch on a number of otherwise taboo subjects, especially traditional notions of authority (the law in *HELP!* is astonishingly inept, cowardly, and ineffectual, while science is somewhat worse) and religion.

The church is an especially dodgy target, though the film makes palatable by creating an utterly fictional and patently absurd Indian cult out to sacrifice Ringo, who has gotten their "sacred sacrificial

ring" stuck on his finger. However, the leader of this cult, Klang (a delightful role for Leo McKern), is seen hobnobbing with western churchmen ("Oh, goodness me, yes, sex is creeping in. It's being thrown at youth. You see it everywhere—in the bazaars, in the marketplaces, in the temple even.") and many of his observations can be easily applied to much that was being said by any church at the time. The difference between Klang musing, "Perhaps if we gave away free tickets to the annual sacrifice and dinner dance, all this could be avoided. It's a very real problem," and the religious concerns of our own society is not great. Add in the fact that, for all his amusement value, Klang is ruthless in his goal to serve his religion at the expense of not only his intended sacrifice, but anyone who happens to get in the way, and *HELP!* becomes pretty brazen in its stance against that most entrenched of establishment traditions.

Still, the film is probably most notable for its stylish innovations in the presentation of its musical numbers, which are invariably clever and a genuine forerunner to the music video. Their deftness (especially "Ticket to Ride") is still fresh 35 years later. All of this, plus the film's typical *British Invasion* off-the-wall charm is beautifully captured in a rock-solid, beautifully restored, gorgeously color saturated transfer that might have benefited from being presented in something other than a 1.33:1 ratio. However, the ratio never makes the film seem cramped, and it doesn't appear that any significant visual information is lost. There are several nice (though not very exciting) extras, including the trailer, two newsreels, and an explanation of the film's restoration. The real treat, though, is the film itself, which still has all its charms intact and perhaps more point and power than we ever before expected.

Ken Hanke

**STRANGE IMPERSONATION**  
Kino on Video  
\$29.95

Frigid chemist Nora Goodrich, married to "pure, cold" science, forsakes the real thing with amorous colleague Stephan Lindstrom. Part-time friend, full-time gold digger Arline Coe arranges for Nora to be horribly disfigured so that she can marry Stephan herself, but resourceful Nora undergoes plastic surgery, adopts a new identity, and teaches Arline what it really means to be "two-faced."

*STRANGE IMPERSONATION* (1946) is a compact Republic Pictures thriller that plays like a distaff installment in the Universal Inner Sanctum series. Herman character actor William Gargan—the romantic lead—even looks as though he was assaulted by the same makeup artist who "g amorized" Sanctum star Lon Chaney Jr. He's adorned with the same

marcelled 'do, heavy mascara, and dapper moustache that Chaney sported. Furthermore, he portrays a brilliant research scientist, whom the rugged Gargan (more believable as tough detectives and military officers) conveys about as effectively as the brutish Chaney did a learned college professor.

Cosmetic violations and curious studio casting aside, *STRANGE IMPERSONATION* is redeemed by the expert performances of its cast. As Nora, Brenda Marshall (then Mrs. William Holden) uses her perfect cheekbones to good advantage, successfully exuding hardhearted sobriety and steamy, cover girl allure. Evoking sultry, spidery Gale Sondergaard, Hillary Brooke, as Arline, is a convincing black widow. (Over at Universal, both Brooke and Sondergaard plied their villainy against Basil Rathbone's Sherlock Holmes.) Lyle Talbot handily scores points with his blustery cameo during a police grilling. Former Jesus Christ (in Cecil B. DeMille's 1927 epic *KING OF KINGS*) H. B. Warner is quietly dignified as the surgeon who miraculously transforms Nora into the blackmailer who died trying to kill her, and affable George Chandler is uncharacteristically nasty as a persecutory ambulance chaser.

Also deserving kudos are Robert Pitlick, whose hallucinatory cinematography heightens the appropriately dreamlike suspense, editor John Link, whose



quick-cut montages during the surgery sequences will seem familiar to Universal horror fans; and film noir architect Anthony Mann, whose deft direction efficiently triumphs over the fraudulent conclusion in the screenplay by *Weird Tales* writer Mindret Lord. (Note the founder of the chemical research institute employing Nora.)

Kino's laudable full-frame transfer promisingly opens with an atypical Republic logo (a clock tower instead of the familiar eagle) that is disappointingly followed by the jarring insertion of ho hum, tacked-on credits. In two instances inferior film elements present distracting contrasts to the otherwise vivid images in the overall handsome, restored print. No special features are included, but the enticing hot-pink keepee is provocatively emblazoned with the lurid tag lines "from the brutal imagination of director Anthony Mann" and "Hell hath no fury as a woman scalded by acid."

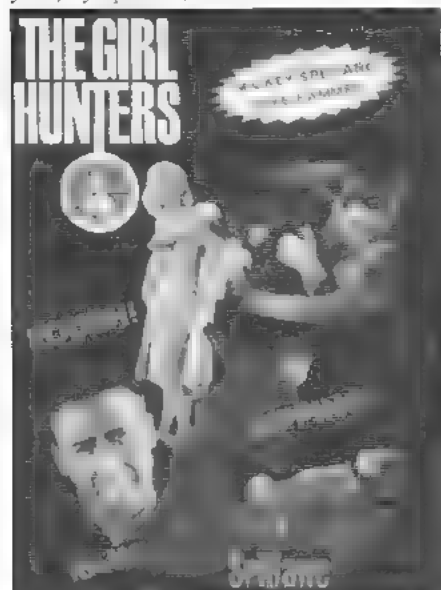
—Michael Anthony Carlsle



**THE GIRL HUNTERS**  
Image Entertainment  
\$24.95

While the role of Mickey Spillane's literary alter ego Mike Hammer has been essayed by talents as diverse as Biff Ebot (1953's *I, THE JURY*), Ralph Meeker (1955's *KISS ME DEADLY*), Darren McGavin (1958-59 TV), Armand Assante (1982's *I, THE JURY*), and Stacy Keach (eighties TV), the screen's greatest Hammer was Spillane himself, in *THE GIRL HUNTERS* (1963).

Coproduced and cowritten (from his comeback Hammer novel of the previous year) by Spillane, *THE GIRL HUNTERS* is



a dark elegy for the hard-boiled detective, a heroic archetype whose era ended with the fifties. A vibrant cast weaves *THE GIRL HUNTERS*' richly embroidered emotional fabric. Lloyd Nolan (private detective Mike Shayne in seven films of the forties) as a laconic, yet determined, FBI agent, James Dyrenforth as a reporter who remembers Hammer's prime, a bikini-clad Shirley Eaton (the paint-clad beauty of 1964's *GOLDFINGER*) as the requisite femme fatale, and most of all, Spillane as Mike Hammer.

Spillane commands an arresting presence as Hammer, who is pulled from the gutter at the beginning of the film. Lapsed into a seven-year-long drunk after the apparent death of his secretary Velda, Hammer is roused back into action when a dying undercover agent tells him that Velda is still alive. (Hammer's skid row hiatus was a literary conceit to explain the 10 year interval between the 1952 novel *Kiss Me, Deadly* and the gritty character's next print appearance, *The Girl Hunters*.)

Apparently spurred on by Spillane's involvement, the undistinguished B-movie director Roy Rowland invests *THE GIRL HUNTERS* with a momentum approaching the impact of Spillane's bare-knuckle prose. Cinematographer Ken Talbot generally foregoes noir shadow play in favor

of dynamic, deep-focus wide-screen compositions. Image's 16/9 enhanced transfer is beautiful, with striking detail and excellent gray scale. Technical note while the snapcase notes claim "THE GIRL HUNTERS is presented in its 2.35:1 theatrical aspect ratio," the correct aspect ratio for Panavision is 2.40:1.

—Michael Draine

**PLANET OF THE APES: THE EVOLUTION**  
20th Century Fox  
\$99.98

For those of you too impatient to wait for the upcoming Tim Burton remake of the original *PLANET OF THE APES* (1968), here's the DVD release of that simian smash hit and its four sequels: *BENEATH THE PLANET OF THE APES* (1970), *ESCAPE FROM THE PLANET OF THE APES* (1971), *CONQUEST OF THE PLANET OF THE APES* (1972), and *BATTLE FOR THE PLANET OF THE APES* (1973).

Not enough? Then there's the extras on each disc, including theatrical trailers, photo galleries, animated menus, a web link, a *PLANET OF THE APES* interactive game trailer, in other words, the whole gorilla—pardon, magilla!

Still not enough? Then turn to the sixth DVD in the set, which features the two-hour documentary *BEHIND THE PLANET OF THE APES* (1998), hosted by *APES* star Roddy McDowall and including interviews with fellow vets—pardon, veterans of the series Charlton Heston and Kim Hunter.

*PLANET OF THE APES* tells the tale of the hell with it, the tale of crusty astronaut Taylor (Heston) who, with two fellow space travellers, lands on the titular planet. His companions don't last long, but Taylor finds himself captured by a race of talking apes, including scientists Cornelius (McDowall), Zira (Hunter), and Dr. Zaius (Maurice Evans, though Edward G. Robinson tested for the part). At story's end, Taylor learns—don't read any further if you've somehow managed to miss one of these films or the subsequent TV series in the last 33 years—Taylor earns that the planet is actually the Earth of the future and that an inarticulate mankind, through war, has relinquished rule to his Darwinian relations.

*BENEATH THE PLANET OF THE APES*, which followed two years later, is considerably closer to grade B sci-fi than its predecessor, providing the planet with a race of underground mutants (including Jeff Corey and Victor Buono). It's not a bad film, exactly, but its pleasures are chiefly visual—stunning sets and matte paintings creating a post-holocaust New York City, curvaceous Linda Harrison (repeating as Taylor's silent companion, Nova), and a remarkably blonde and hunky James Franciscus as yet another as-



tronaut who has found his way into our unhappy future.

*ESCAPE FROM THE PLANET OF THE APES* reverses the trend, with Cornelius, Zira, and Dr. Milo (Sal Mineo, wasted in a brief cameo) travel back to the Third Rock of the 20th century. It's a superior sequel, and puts the last two entries (which more or less take us full circle back to the beginning of the saga) to shame—though even these assembly-line features are not without their pleasurable monkeyshines. They're also sprinkled with appearances by some well-loved actors of the period, including Ricardo Montalban, Bradford Dillman, James Gregory, Don Murray, Eric Braeden, and Claude Akins. Those playing apes will especially be missed in the Burton retread, since so few thespians of today are so easily recognized by their voices alone.

The picture quality on these letterboxed (except for *BEHIND*) DVDs is on a par with the previous laserdisc releases, namely sharp and colorful. So—go ape!

—Drew Sullivan

**THE VIKING QUEEN**  
Anchor Bay  
\$29.95

If the sight of a scantily-clad woman driving a chariot with tusklike blades protruding from its wheels is your idea of cinema heaven, then the 1967 Hammer Studios opus *THE VIKING QUEEN* is just the movie for you. A lesser-known offering from the famed British company that specialized in horror and fantasy, this one pretty much attempts to stay in the realm of the marginally plausible. Of course, there is not much coin to be made from a cut-and-dried history lesson, so *QUEEN* is one of those period offerings that go out of their way to peel away the clothing of the more shapely female cast members as frequently as possible.

A prologue explains how the conquest of the Roman Empire spread to England, where the conquerors received some opposition from the Druid tribes. The Roman governor general, Justinian (visiting American actor Don Murray with a false nose that doesn't quite match his natural skin tone), tries to play fair and keep

some level of peace with these people, but his second in command, Octavian (Andrew Keir), would just as soon burn down a village or two and take his whip to the more rebellious ladies.

Justinian's noble intentions, however, are not merely a good neighbor policy, since he has the hots for the newly-crowned Druid queen, Salina (Carita). This heat is reciprocated during a wild boar hunt, when Justinian finds his chariot falling apart and must leap onto Salina's baby-blue vehicle for safety. Forgetting the wild boar momentarily, the couple falls into a nearby lake for a passionate kiss—followed by some offscreen sex. All's well until Octavian begins cooking up his plan to deceive Salina and her tribe, leading to a final battle that shatters all hopes for peaceful coexistence.

All this is played in a surprisingly straightforward fashion by most of the cast, although Donald Houston's scene-chomping turn as the High Priest is badly in need of toning down. (Houston was



THE LONG NIGHT

Kino on Video

\$29.95

In 1947, RKO Pictures bought the rights to Marcel Carne's 1939 drama *LE JOUR SE LEVE* (*DAYBREAK*) about a factory worker who kills a man, barricades himself in his apartment against the police, and recalls the events that lead him to commit murder. Titled *THE LONG NIGHT*, the remake starred Henry Fonda, Barbara Bel Geddes, and Vincent Price.

As portrayed by Fonda, the protagonist Joe Adams could well be the city cousin of Tom Joad. Like Joad, he is a proletarian Common Man, a simple, decent, hard-working Joe—in this case, a war veteran struggling to fit back into society. Contrasting Joe is the patrician Maximilian (Price), who is Adams' rival for Jo Ann (Bel Geddes). The suave, supercilious aesthete uses his erudition to browbeat and belittle Joe ("Okay. So you're smart, I'm dumb!") about his blue-collar status ("persons who do common, manual work"). This politically charged subplot exploring class warfare is punctuated by the contrasting screen personae of Fonda (homespun, parochial, rustic) and Price (refined, cosmopolitan, urbane).

But Fonda's folksy image antithetical to the ambiguous, dangerous characters of *noir* icons Robert Mitchum, Richard Widmark, and Tom Neal significantly alters the plot's fatalistic tone, leavening the finale with a hopefulness and optimism strongly contrary to the pitiless precepts of *film noir*. A warning is sounded by the narrated exposition, which evokes *OUR TOWN*. Similarly, Dimitri Tiomkin's application of the second movement of Beethoven's *Symphony No. 7* as a leitmotif adds a discordant, high-toned grandeur absent from a more typical *noir* nocturne. Thus, from a thematic and tonal perspective, the RKO adaptation refutes stereotypical *noir* conventions such as a hard-boiled antihero and a downbeat story with a denouement that is bleak or, at least, uncertain.

However, *THE LONG NIGHT* is gloriously

redeemed by its arresting visual style. The filmmakers used the celebrated look of Carne's "Poetic Realist" classic as their artistic blueprint to superbly realize a gray, grimy, industrial milieu that emphasizes the laborious lives of the working-class characters.

Expressionistic imagery in conjunction with familiar plot devices such as the flashback and voiceover further affirm the film's *noir* credentials.

Beautifully presented by Kino, which offers clips of *LE JOUR SE LEVE* for comparison, Anatole Litvak's *THE LONG NIGHT* definitely deserves its place in the collections of *film noir* aficionados.

—Michael Anthony Carlisle

## GORG0

VCI Home Video

\$24.99

Once again, the City of London is under attack, not by the German Luftwaffe, but by Gorgo—or rather, Mama Gorgo! You see, someone has stolen her baby, and she's one tough mama out lookin' for her youngster! Where else would a country kid seeking new experiences go but to the Big City?

*GORG0* (1961) is not just another monster-against-man movie; it's a movie with a moral. Awakened by an underwater volcano, Gorgo is found off the coast of Nara Island, near Ireland. Salvagers Joe and Sam (Bill Travers and William Sylvester) find they can make more money by selling Gorgo to the circus than by scavenging along the sea bottom. Along with young island native Sean (Vincent Winter), Joe and Sam bring the great beast to London for all to see.

But surprise: Gorgo is just an infant, and where there are children, there are usually parents. Well, Mama Gorgo comes a callin'. Following her young'un's phosphorous trail up the River Thames, left by the water used to keep the animal moist, Mama Gorgo wreaks havoc on the fair city, reducing most of it to rubble.

The DVD version of *GORG0* is far superior to its VHS counterpart. The sharp-



ness and clarity of the film is absolutely spectacular and even the audio track is crisper. Presented in its widescreen 1.66:1 ratio, the film is a joy to watch, even if you've already seen it a number of times. Special features include a photo gallery, a behind-the-scenes short, and the original theatrical trailer.

Dan Clayton



Dr. Watson in 1965's *A STUDY IN TERROR*.) Keir makes for a fine, understated villain, while Adrienne Corri (another *STUDY* veteran), as Salina's sister and the rightful heir to the Druid throne, is shamefully underused. Murray, looking less foolish in a Roman toga than might be expected, does a serviceable job but hardly convinces anyone that this trip overseas was a career-enhancing move. As the title character, Carita is just what you might expect: a curvaceous babe with a thick accent and a minimal amount of drama-school experience. She is officially "introduced" here, though perhaps only her nearest relatives kept track of what ever course her career in show business took after this venture.

This letterboxed *VIKING QUEEN* has been beautifully transferred to DVD, with sharp colors that emphasize the attractive location shooting in County Wicklow, Ireland. In addition to the original theatrical trailer, which promises that you will see "Men roasted alive in the Cage of Hell!" (and don't worry, you will!), there is a 25-minute episode of *THE WORLD OF HAMMER* entitled "Lands Before Time." Narrated by Hammer alumnus Oliver Reed, it features extensive clips from such features as *SHE* (1965), *ONE MILLION YEARS B.C.* (1966), and *THE LOST CONTINENT* (1968).

—Barry Monush



**THE JAMES BOND COLLECTION:  
VOLUME THREE**  
MGM Home Entertainment  
\$134.96

The third set of Special Edition James Bond DVDs from MGM Home Video completes the Broccoli series to date. Like the first two boxed sets (reviewed in *Scarlet Street* #40), this set brings the Bond films to light in razor sharp clarity, gloriously letterboxed in their original aspect ratios and with the best sound they have ever had on a home video format. With the bounty of great supplements each disc sports, the Bond DVDs have also shown that MGM knows how to put together killer special editions.

This set begins with Sean Connery's sophomore outing as Bond in *FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE* (1963). This landmark entry introduced many of the elements that would become central to the later Bond films: the precredit sequence, the popular title song, the clever gadgets,

only been seen from behind with his trademark cat, but fans finally get to see the villain, as played to the hilt by Donald Pleasence in marvelously grotesque makeup, up close and personal.

*DIAMONDS ARE FOREVER* (1971) marks the end of two major elements in the Bond series to that point: it is the last time Sean Connery played James Bond in the Broccoli series and is the last film to use *SPECTRE* and Blofeld as its central villains. This time out, Blofeld (Charles Gray) has built a death-ray satellite and is hiding out in Las Vegas. Bond is aided by smuggler Tiffany Case (Jill St. John) and must battle the memorable (and overtly homosexual) assassins Mr. Wint and Mr. Kidd (Bruce Glover and Putter Smith).

*OCTOPUSSY* (1983) has Roger Moore's Bond out to stop Louis Jourdan's Kamal Khan from destroying a fragile nuclear disarmament in Eastern Europe. Maud Adams, the only woman to star in two Bond films (she was the doomed lover of 1974's *THE MAN WITH THE GOLDEN GUN*), stars as Octopussy. Based on two of Fleming short stories ("Portrait of a Lady" and "Octopussy"), this film might be seen as a sequel to the title story. At one point, Octopussy tells Bond of her late father and basically summarizes the Fleming story.

*A VIEW TO A KILL* (1985) marks the final performance of series veteran Lois Maxwell as Miss Moneypenny and the end of the Roger Moore era. Evil industrialist Max Zorin (Christopher Walken), aided by the deadly May Day (Grace Jones), plots to destroy Silicon Valley and corner the world's microchip industry. Bond has Stacy Sutton (*CHARLIE'S ANGELS*' Tanya Roberts) and Sir Godfrey Tibbett (John Steed himself, Patrick McNee) on his side, insuring that James Bond will return in...

*THE LIVING DAYLIGHTS* (1987) sees a much needed overhaul to the Bond franchise. The later Moore films were becoming cartoonish and overly gadget- and joke-laden. *DAYLIGHTS* marks a return to the gritty, rough, and hard-edged Bond of the Fleming novels and early Connery films. Timothy Dalton makes a spectacular debut in the role, pitted against a crazed Russian general (Jeroen Krabbe) and an arms dealer (Joe Don Baker) as they plot international conspiracy. This film also marks the return of the beloved Aston Martin, which hadn't been seen since *ON HER MAJESTY'S SECRET SERVICE*, to the franchise.

MGM has done a spectacular job on the supplements for the films. Each contains a commentary track featuring each film's individual director (Terence Young, Lewis Gilbert, Guy Hamilton, and John Glen) and interview snippets with the cast and crew. In addition to the trailers and music videos (where available), each disc also features a pair of excellent documentaries: "Inside (name of film)" are very well put together histories filled with interviews, behind the scenes footage, special effects tests, and other rare treats (like Sam Neill's screen test for Bond on *THE*

*LIVING DAYLIGHTS* disc.) The second minidocumentary is focused on one person or aspect of the series, including Harry Saltzman, Albert Broccoli, Ian Fleming, Maurice Binder (and the title sequences), art director Peter Lamont, and composer John Barry. Taken as a whole, the documentaries on these three box sets give a fantastic insight into the creation of the most popular film series of all time. The Still Gallery, featured on several of the previous discs, contains numerous never before-seen stills from the films. (Unfortunately, the only disc to feature the Still Gallery in this set is *FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE*, but it is filled with rare photos and boasts 22 original international posters!) Several discs feature rare deleted scenes (*THE LIVING DAYLIGHTS* and *A VIEW TO A KILL* feature a single scene and *DIAMONDS ARE FOREVER* features four, including a gag with Sammy Davis Jr.) Each disc also contains a booklet of fun facts.

The back of each keep case proclaims it as The Ultimate Edition, and they might just be right. Nobody does it better than Bond, and nobody has done Bond better than these MGM DVDs.

Jeff Allen

**PYTHON**  
20th Century Fox  
\$34.99

The best way to catch the direct-to-DVD *PYTHON* is to watch it now, stow it away for 30 or 40 years, then watch it again. You'll be amazed at how a grade B or C

Continued on page 78

1986 Mfr. Goldwyn Mayer



Major Boothroyd (Desmond Llewellyn) of "Q" Branch, and the first glimpse of super-nemesis Ernst Stavro Blofeld. Bond is up against *SPECTRE* agents Rosa Klebb (Lotte Lenya) and Donovan "Red" Grant (Robert Shaw), with a Soviet Lektor decoder as their common goal. The beautiful Tatiana Romanova (Daniela Bianchi) aids Bond from the Orient Express to the thrilling boat chase in Turkey to the final confrontation in Vienna—not to mention the bedroom, naturally.

*YOU ONLY LIVE TWICE* (1967) has Connery's Bond battling *SPECTRE* yet again, as Blofeld hijacks U.S. and Soviet space capsules in hopes of starting nuclear war. This film features several classic Bond items, including "Little Nellie," the fantastic mini-airplane chock full of lethal artillery, and Ken Adam's glorious volcano set (which was one of the largest and most expensive sets ever at the time). The film also contains the much anticipated first face-to-face meeting of Bond and Blofeld. Up till this film, Blofeld had

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# THE MAN WITH THREE BRAINS CURT SIODMAK

*"Carl Laemmle had a son whom he groomed to take over the studio. Carl Laemmle Jr. became the producer of FRANKENSTEIN, a perennial monkey maker for the company, which spawned dozens of Frankenstein pictures. Anybody can become a film producer or motion picture director, but certainly not a creative writer. Studio people are reproductive, except the writer who is faced with an empty page which he has to cover with letters, that finally appear on the screen as motion pictures."*

—Curt Siodmak

**B**orn in Dresden in 1902, Curt Siodmak was a published writer before he'd hit his teenage years, a reporter in his early twenties, an extra on the set of Fritz Lang's 1926 sci-fi classic METROPOLIS at the age of 24, a screenwriter for F.P. 1 DOES NOT ANSWER at the age of 30, and a refugee at the age of 31.

Emigrating to England, Siodmak wrote the screenplay for TRANS-ATLANTIC TUNNEL (1935) and NON-STOP NEW YORK (1937). Arriving in Hollywood in 1937, he helped make a star of Paramount's sarong girl, Dorothy Lamour, with the screenplays for HER JUNGLE LOVE (1938) and ALOMA OF THE SOUTH SEAS (1941). He provided Monogram with one of its rare good screenplays and Boris Karloff with his best role for the company in THE APE (1940). Later, for RKO, Siodmak joined forces with producer Val Lewton to fashion one of the classics of horror-dom. I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE (1943).

For all his success at other studios, it was at Universal that Curt Siodmak delivered his best-loved work, writing the stories or screenplays (or both) for such fantastic films as BLACK FRIDAY (1940), THE INVISIBLE MAN RETURNS (1940), FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLF MAN (1943), and SON OF DRACULA. For THE WOLF MAN (1941), Siodmak created the tragically lycanthropic Larry

Talbot, who rapidly took his place with Count Dracula and the Frankenstein Monster as one of the most enduring monster icons.

Siodmak also found time to write his most famous novel, Donovan's Brain (1942), which found its way onto the screen three times, as THE LADY AND THE MONSTER (1944), DONOVAN'S BRAIN (1953), and THE BRAIN (1964). Among his other screenwriting credits: THE BEAST WITH FIVE FINGERS (1946), TARZAN'S MAGIC FOUNTAIN (1949), BRIDE OF THE GORILLA (1951, also as director), and MAGNETIC MONSTER (1953, also as director).

Curt Siodmak died on September 2, 2000. Here is the concluding installment of *Scarlet Street's* interview with this genre legend....

**Curt Siodmak:** Goebbels gave a speech about the film industry, and he said, "The world is not as is depicted in the mind of the Jewish film director!" And you were ostracized. All the friends you had, you grew up with and went out with, were almost never the same. The guys across the street, they don't want to talk to you. Unfortunately, there is much of that still, here in America....

*Scarlet Street:* Unfortunately, yes.

**CS:** It must stop! Forget about all the ethnic shit; when people are dead in their

graves, they all look alike! (Laughs) Germany is still a country of bigotry in this regard, too, though I don't want to say this. Of course, my wife and I had the perfect marriage, though I am Jewish and she is not, and we are together for 70 years. We both came from very poor families, where the idea of marriage was you got married and had a child, that was it. The following year, you give the big party, saying you slept together and met the requirements! In America, young people meet by chance and afterwards are always saying, "Guess who I fucked! Guess!" My son got a divorce, and it's a lesson for all young people—never start with the dessert, because you end up with the soup! What were we talking about?

*SS:* Lon Chaney Jr., actually.

**CS:** I remember, I did 13 TV shows in Sweden called NO 13 DEMON STREET. It was for a lousy company, I think, called Herts-Lion. It was not a pleasant experience. It was with Lon Chaney Jr., whose career always crossed paths with mine. Lon was not in any of the stories, only the introductory scenes—like Boris Karloff in THRILLER. In fact, NBC stole the idea of NO 13 DEMON STREET and used it for THRILLER. My stories were better than THRILLER, but they didn't sell; American television wasn't interested. I wrote a book about my experiences in Sweden.

## Interview by Kevin G. Shinnick and Terry Pace





SS: A book about NO. 13 DEMON STREET?

CS: No, no, about welfare in Sweden. I was profoundly shocked by the welfare state in Stockholm, and wrote a book about it called *Despair in Paradise*. It's a novel, unpublished.

SS: Weren't three of the DEMON STREET episodes turned into a feature film?

CS: Without my permission, and with no credit for me! They stuck three episodes together, called it *THE DEVIL'S MESSENGER*, and put Herbert Strock's name on it as director!

SS: Did you enjoy being reunited with Lon Chaney Jr. on another project?

CS: No! He was a drunk, an alcoholic, and very difficult. It was in 1960, and he was deteriorating very rapidly. He would show up on the set and hang out with a bottle. I said, "Lon, you cannot do that. We're shooting and directing the stuff over here and you're interfering with the work. You cannot do that." He said he couldn't work without first having a drink, so I said, "That's okay, but you cannot drink on the set. Take lunch, go to your office, to your room and have a snort if you want to—but don't do it in front of the group." He needed to be told, to be guided. He was a nice but unhappy man, forever in search of a father figure.

SS: Because his father, the famous Man of a Thousand Faces?

CS: Was a son of bitch to him. There were many of them in this business. There was a son of a bitch in England that was called Alfred Hitchcock!

SS: The name is familiar.

CS: A practical joker! He sent me one day 50 pounds of shit in a box! Sylvia Sidney made a picture for Hitchcock at Gaumont in England, where I worked before coming to America. It was called *SABOTAGE*. Hitchcock hated her and would call her by her original name, Sophia Kosow, which he thought insulting. In her big scene, she commits a murder with a knife. Hitchcock photographed only her hand with the knife, not her face. A real son of a bitch!

SS: Aside from Hitchcock, did you like working at Gaumont?

CS: I had many interesting times working at Gaumont, and might have stayed, but my wife Henrietta wanted to go to America. She had dreamed of America since she was a child.

SS: How did you manage the move?

CS: George Arliss wanted to make a film of *Cagliostro*, the Italian con man. Arliss was already 70, and *Cagliostro* died when he was 50! (Laughs) I wrote a story called "The Magician," which Arliss liked. I was paid a lot of money for it, enough to finance the trip to America. Gaumont hired Emlyn Williams, who had made a great success with his stage play *NIGHT MUST FALL*, to add to my story. It was said Williams was the lover of John Gielgud and Noel Coward!

SS: He must have been a very busy man!

CS: Very busy, because he also married and had a son. John Gielgud and Noel Coward were both at the baptism, and Dame May Whitty said, "What a lucky child to have two fairy godfathers!"

SS: What happened to your *Cagliostro* story?

CS: Never filmed. George Arliss said he was happy with it, but he demanded one change that destroyed the whole story. I told him, and it was never filmed. One of many stories never filmed. The last time Hitchcock came to my home, he asked me to write a story of a deaf and dumb woman detective! And I had the idea! Still could do it today! Was the story of a girl who is in business, and she is so God-damned tired that she takes a cruise with her girlfriend. The friend tells people that the girl cannot talk, she cannot hear—because she wants to rest, wants to be left alone. She goes to her cabin, goes to the wrong cabin and there are two guys talking to each other, plotting murder. "Wait a minute, she cannot hear us! She'll keep her mouth shut." Typical Hitchcock thing!

SS: A good idea, though!

CS: My friend Charles Bennett, who wrote pictures for Hitchcock, always called me the idea man. He said, "Don't wait for work to come to you, for assignments. Feed them ideas! Anyone can write the screenplay based on someone else's idea, but not everyone can have the idea."

SS: A lot of Hitchcock's writers, Charles Bennett included, resented him because they felt Hitchcock never gave credit to any of them.

CS: Of course not! Or to actors, either. Everyone says Hitchcock said, "Actors are cattle." Hitchcock said, "I didn't say that actors are cattle, I said they should be treated like cattle!" Some crust! Good director! He was some sadist!







**PAGE 29:** Larry Talbot (Lon Chaney Jr.) pays a hair-raising visit to the village of Vasaria in **FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLF MAN** (1943). **LEFT:** Curt Siodmak concocted the story and brother Robert directed Lon Chaney Jr. as Count Alucard, **SON OF DRACULA** (1943). **CENTER:** Dorothy Lamour and Jon Hall, stars of John Ford's **THE HURRICANE** (1937), were reunited for Paramount's **ALOMA OF THE SOUTH SEAS** (1941). **RIGHT:** Siodmak's last word with Lon Chaney Jr. was for the teleseries **NO. 13 DEMON STREET**, filmed in Sweden. **BELOW:** Chaney Jr. menaces forties scream queen Evelyn Ankers in **THE WOLF MAN** (1941).

**SS:** Let's back up a bit. Tell us about your early days in Hollywood

**CS:** I went to Paramount Studios and they gave me a job. Of course, I was a Jew and Jews in Hollywood they give a job. Also, I knew a man named Howard Bromley from my days at Gaumont in England, and he had become an agent in Hollywood. He introduced me to Manny Wolfe, a story editor at Paramount. He was impressed, because I had already been published in America, by Little-Brown in Boston, who came out with a translation of *F.P.1 Does Not Reply*. Also, I insulted him and he was impressed by that, too, by a writer in desperate need of a job insulting him. So he hired me. I wrote a picture for Dorothy Lamour, called **HER JUNGLE LOVE**, and later **ALOMA OF THE SOUTH SEAS**. I worked with two female writers, Lillie Hayward and Seena Owen. Both had been

actresses in silent pictures, Seena appearing in **INTOLERANCE** for D.W. Griffith. Seena must have been very pretty one

day, but she was full of dope and she looked like hell. But look at what the studio did—they allowed Seena and Lillie on the payroll as charity, even though both were heavy drinkers and possibly drug users. They became writers, and they took me, a young guy, they put me with them and I wrote the pictures for them.

**SS:** Did they resent you? Did they mind your being around?

our with her costar from **THE HURRICANE**, Jon Hall, who would today be called a hunk. The music was by my friend, Frederick Hollander. It is a nice little film and deserves to be seen again.

**SS:** You had quite a few collaborators through the years, didn't you?

**CS:** At first in Hollywood, yes, because they thought I couldn't handle the language. Often, they were women. I was teamed with a very sexy woman named Constance Hill, to write a picture for Albert Lewin, a first-time producer. Lewin was always parading his intellectual pretensions, treating everyone like they were his students. He talked about Omar Khayyam, Omar Khayyam all the time! (Laughs) At story conferences, he would let me go early but keep Constance Hill. I began to suspect that she was not there for her writing abilities!

**SS:** Perhaps she liked Omar Khayyam, too?

**CS:** I was very uncomfortable with the situation, but it didn't last for very long. Albert Lewin kept Constance Hill, and had me fired! That was the last work I did for Paramount.

**SS:** So if Albert Lewin hadn't been cheating on his wife, you might never have left Paramount, gone to Universal, and created *The Wolf Man*?

**CS:** That's right, yes! (Laughs)

**SS:** Let's talk about some of your Universal horror movies. Do you have any particular memories of **THE INVISIBLE WOMAN**?

**CS:** Yes, of John Barrymore, drunk all the time. He couldn't remember his lines and they had to be posted all over the set, or put on papers than he could hold in character. We had to string him up by wires so he wouldn't sway back and forth!

**SS:** **THE INVISIBLE WOMAN** was a departure for you—a comedy.

**CS:** I wrote more comedy than you would think, and musicals. All the invisibility picture had comedy, but **THE INVISIBLE WOMAN** was all comedy and very funny.

**SS:** Were your scripts for **THE INVISIBLE MAN RETURNS**, **THE INVISIBLE WOMAN**, or **INVISIBLE AGENT** written to the dictates of what John P. Fulton's special effects department could deliver?

**CS:** Not at all. I told them what they had to do for the story, and they did it. No matter how impossible the special effect I thought up, they did it without fail.

**CS:** At first they were suspicious, yes, but then they started to put on nice clothes and put on more makeup, and started to flirt. They were both at least 10 years older than me and I had to fight for my virtue! (Laughs)

**SS:** The Dorothy Lamour-savvy films are lots of fun, but they're almost never shown these days.

**CS:** **ALOMA OF THE SOUTH SEAS** was based on an old play and had to be completely rewritten to make it a musical.

Paramount re-teamed Lam-



LEFT: Larry Talbot enlists the aid of the Frankenstein Monster (Bela Lugosi) in tracking down the Frankensteinian secrets of life and death for the purpose of dying. Alas, Lugosi, poorly served by studio tampering that removed mention of the Monster's blindness and every last line of his dialogue, wasn't up to the challenge of portraying the character so memorably created by Boris Karloff. CENTER: Stock footage from the 1934 German film *GOLD* made for a spectacular finale to *THE MAGNETIC MONSTER* (1953), directed by Curt Siodmak. RIGHT: Butler Charles Ruggles gets a kick out of Virginia Bruce, *THE INVISIBLE WOMAN* (1940)

Fulton was a genius at his job, an absolute genius

SS: *THE CLIMAX* wasn't a sequel, a followup to Universal's 1943 *PHANTOM OF THE OPERA*

CS: But *THE CLIMAX*, I never read the book. I always had original ideas. I'm sorry, it's my profession. I had an excellent idea—a man is in love with an opera singer, then he kills her. Years later, he hears a woman in a conservatory who has the same voice. The voice comes back to haunt him. Now this is what they call the idea of the story. From that moment on, you can take the many in many different directions, but you have to have the idea, and I could always come up with the idea. That's why I got jobs. They gave me the title, four weeks later there was the movie. That's a talent.

SS: Did you like Boris Karloff?

CS: Well, I knew Karloff well. He was a lovely, soft-spoken man, and he came to our house and read some children's story to my son. He was a lovely man, but you know, you make friends in motion pictures for life who you never see again! Every time you're on another picture, there's another group of people and you make friends.

SS: But only for the duration of the filming?

CS: That's it exactly. I know a lot of important people. Why do I know them, the important people? I know them because they were not important when I met them! (Laughs)

SS: In Germany, you worked with another man who made a name for himself in American horror films—Edgar G. Ulmer. Were you on friendly terms?

CS: I didn't know him very much. He was a cruel guy, too, like Hitchcock.

SS: One of your most notorious writing assignments was for *FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLF MAN*.

CS: It started only as a joke, a bad joke, and it became a worse one. I was having lunch with George Waggner in the Universal commissary. I said, "Why don't we make a picture called *FRANKENSTEIN WOLFS THE MEAT MAN*—I mean, *FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLF MAN*?" He didn't laugh. George knew I wanted to buy a new car, but I didn't want to buy one without a job to pay for it. He kept saying, "Oh, buy the car and a

job will come along." Finally, I gave in and bought the car. I told George I had bought the car, and he said, "Good. Your next writing assignment is *FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLF MAN*. I give you two hours to accept." Well, I was licked; I had to accept!

SS: It was a case of one of your ideas being—in your own opinion—not very good.

CS: The title wasn't good, but when I had to sit down and think about it, the idea was good. It was simple: The Wolf Man meets Frankenstein's Monster. One wants to die and cannot die, and the other wants to live forever. From that moment on, you could take the story in many different directions.

SS: Your script gave the Monster dialogue.

CS: I wrote dialogue for the Monster, who was blind and still had Ygor's brain from the previous picture. Bela Lugosi had played Ygor and was now playing the Monster, which made sense, instead of dubbing another actor with Lugosi's voice. Well, Lugosi couldn't talk.

SS: He couldn't talk?

CS: As Dracula, he could talk. He couldn't talk in a way that didn't sound funny coming out of the Monster's mouth. The dialogue scenes sounded so funny in Lugosi's Hungarian accent, they had to cut them out. They didn't care that the story didn't make any sense without them. Then they decided to drop all the business of the Monster being blind. You didn't know he was blind. You didn't know he could speak. They didn't think the audience would notice!

SS: The audience noticed.

CS: The picture had no continuity to the story before it. The Wolf Man part did, but not the Frankenstein part. It was a point of honor for the writers to continue the story properly, to kill the monsters so that the writer of the next picture had to think of a very clever way to bring them back. We made of it a game.

SS: Did you have much input on *HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN*?

CS: I don't think so. (Laughs)

SS: Didn't you write the original story?

CS: Yes, but I didn't think that one was a good idea. It wasn't my idea—no, they wanted to put all the monsters together in one picture, like a musical with specialty numbers.

SS: Let's hear something about *THE BEAST WITH FIVE FINGERS*.

CS: I talked to William Jacobs, who was the producer, and I said, "Look, I wrote this picture for Paul Henreid, not for Peter Lorre, because with such a good-looking guy, the murderer is much more dangerous and surprising than his freaky thing, this Lorre!" But Paul Henreid wanted nothing to do with it, and so they took Lorre. I wanted to direct it, but I didn't get it. Jacques Tourneur didn't want to do the script, and they chose him!

SS: Actually, it was Robert Florey who directed *THE BEAST WITH FIVE FINGERS*.

CS: That's right. I didn't like either of them. Robert Florey said that he had the great idea, that the disembodied hand is only in the madman's mind—my idea! (Laughs) You don't know how often my ideas are stolen! I start it and somebody else takes the topic and builds it! Directing is nothing, you sit on your ass in the chair and your actors are in front of the camera—everything is in place. Writing is the hard part.

SS: Did you enjoy directing your own scripts?

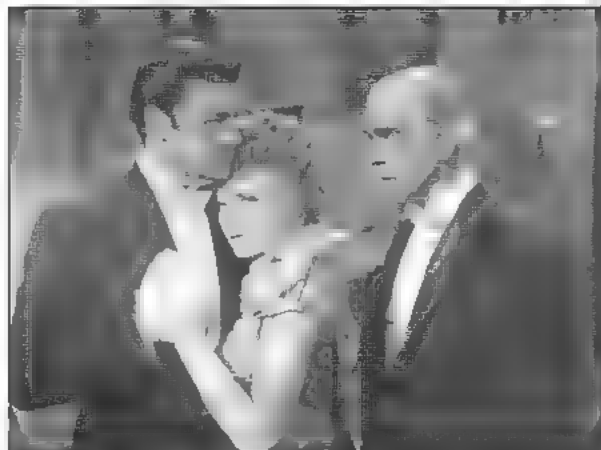
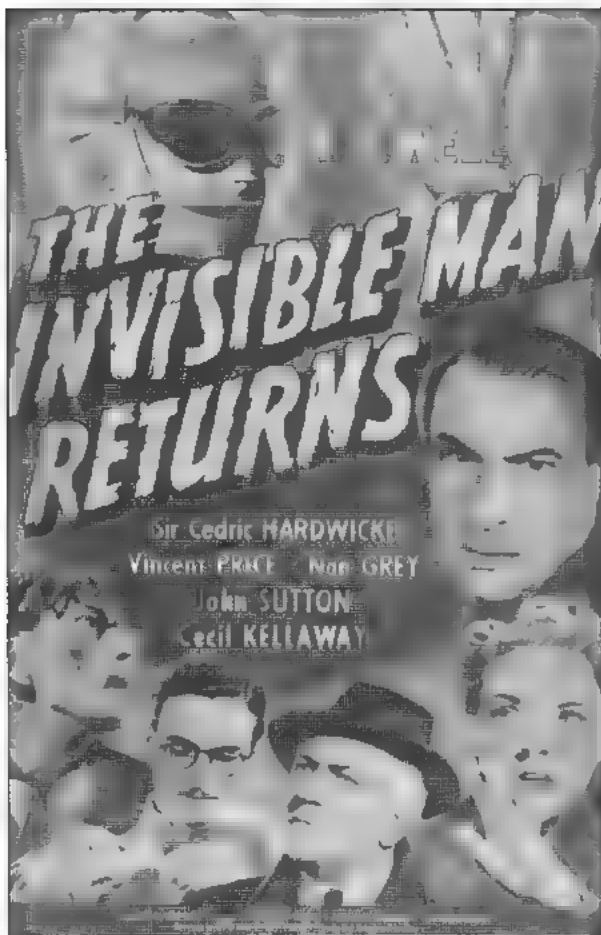
CS: No! I wrote a story called *THE FACE IN THE WATER*, which the producer, Jack Broder, in his wisdom changed to *THE BRIDES OF THE GORILLA*. I got \$2,000 for the screenplay, and then they had me direct it. I shot it in seven days, my first directing job. I got stage fright on the first day. I froze and didn't know what to do or say. Jack Broder wanted to fire me, but the cast and crew backed me up and I remained. I was an old pro on my second day! (Laughs)

SS: Didn't you have a deal with your brother, Robert, that you wouldn't direct films and he wouldn't write them?

CS: He couldn't write! Couldn't write! (Laughs) You see, anyone can direct or can produce or whatever it is, but not everyone can write. Not that it matters in Hollywood—I could be the worst writer in the world, but after I've written it, everybody writes it better! That's the whole idea of writing in Hollywood. The writer is like a prostitute, cleaning woman—nobody cares.

SS: There's a character in *BRIDE OF THE GORILLA* who is much like Maleva in *THE WOLF MAN*. She knows Raymond Burr turns into—or rather, *thinks* he turns into—a





**TOP:** Curt Siodmak made his Universal debut with *THE INVISIBLE MAN RETURNS* (1940), which also marked Vincent Price's debut as a horror star. **ABOVE:** Turhan Bey takes time out from munching on theater programs to protect Susanna Foster from the murderous machinations of Boris Karloff in *THE CLIMAX* (1944), the Technicolor followup to the previous year's *PHANTOM OF THE OPERA* (1943).

gorilla. She's played by an actress named Gisela Werbisek.

**CS:** This was a famous comedienne, the Marie Dressler of Vienna. She didn't like the American pronunciation of her name, though, because it sounded like "Little Shit" in German!

**SS:** Getting back to *THE BEAST WITH FIVE FINGERS* for just a minute—having been stuck with Peter Lorre, did you find that you liked him?

**CS:** In the film, yes. In life, no! He was a sadistic son of a bitch, like Hitchcock! Peter was sick, too. He drank every day and all day he drank sherry. I don't know if it's true, but I was told he would go to hospitals to watch operations, for the entertainment! Freaky, like I said.

**SS:** How about writing a movie for Tarzan?

**CS:** That was fun! Sol Lesser, the son of a bitch, lived in Palm Springs and said I could work right there. He owned the rights to the Tarzan character for films. I shouldn't call him a son of a bitch. He was a pleasant enough man, but like so many ruthless in business. And he had two whores flying in regularly from Los Angeles; he rented for them a bungalow and his wife didn't know about it. I was his cover-up, when he was supposed to be meeting me for a story conference, he was fucking them! (Laughs)

**SS:** The movie, *TARZAN'S MAGIC FOUNTAIN*, was the first in the series with Lex Barker, wasn't it?

**CS:** I had met Lex Barker at the Polo Lounge and suggested him to Sol. He was a very handsome man, like Jon Hall another hunk, and he replaced Johnny Weissmuller, who was too old and fat.

**SS:** Pity Weissmuller couldn't have used the magic waters of your story, which was about a fountain of youth.

**CS:** To be young and good-looking is best. I used to go to the Racket Club with Paulette Goddard, where I would watch all the young and good-looking actors and actresses. By the pool they wore very little, and it seemed very much the way to live.

**SS:** Let's touch on some more of your sci-fi films. What was the genesis of an earlier film—*BLACK FRIDAY*?

**CS:** It was just a takeoff on my *Donovan's Brain*. More brains, always brains...

**SS:** Did you like directing the sci-fi fums you made in the fifties, such as *CREATURE WITH THE ATOM BRAIN* and *THE MAGNETIC MONSTER*?

**CS:** No!

**SS:** Herbert L. Strock claimed that he directed *THE MAGNETIC MONSTER*.

**CS:** Oh, stop! (Laughs) Why didn't he do good pictures before and after, then? And who wrote the script, did he? He forced himself, his name on it, but he didn't

write it. People want to be immortal, and immortality is only in the word. By which I mean, who was the director of Shakespeare's plays...?

**SS:** *THE MAGNETIC MONSTER* is a highly regarded film.

**CS:** The producer, Ivan Tors, had some film from a German picture called *GOLD* and had no write a script to fit the special effects footage. It was a cheap picture, but because of the German footage it looked like a million dollars. Richard Carlson was the star. Another alcoholic.

**SS:** Did you enjoy the work you did for Hammer Films?

**CS:** Did I work for Hammer?

**SS:** You directed the television pilot *TALES OF FRANKENSTEIN*.

**CS:** Oh, I did that fly-by night thing! (Laughs) For Columbia, who had the deal with Hammer. How can you have a whole television show on Frankenstein stories? I told them don't do it, but they didn't listen and it didn't sell.

**SS:** You directed two films back to back down in South America—*CURUCU BEAST OF THE AMAZON* and *LOVE SLAVES OF THE AMAZON*.

**CS:** No, no, not back-to-back! Otherwise I fucked up, I'm sorry! I wrote *CURUCU* with no producer in mind. The script got to two young producers, Richard Kay and Harry Rybnick, I don't know how. It was a story about a female biochemist who goes up the Amazon to learn all about shrunken heads. Beverly Garland was the star. She was looking to get away from her ex-husband, who she had just gotten a divorce, and decided to hide in Brazil! (Laughs) Beverly is what they call a trouper, a tough woman—but very nice. For *LOVE SLAVES*, I only had so much film with me and had to make every foot of it count. I rehearsed everything over and over, so that there would be no retakes. On location there was no way to see what we shot the dailies, so I had to keep the whole picture in my mind.

**SS:** Do you have a favorite director? Which of the great directors would you most like to have directed one of your screenplays?

**CS:** Cannot think of one.

**SS:** Not even Billy Wilder or Orson Welles?

**CS:** Look, I'll tell you something. Frank Capra had James Stewart for his movies, Billy had Jack Lemmon. Without them, they couldn't make a picture anymore. No director is so great he does it alone. Billy's greatest success, *SOME LIKE IT HOT*, was with Jack Lemmon. He never equalled it. I visited Billy on the set, and watched Jack Lemmon and Tony Curtis dressed as women. Even when the camera wasn't running, I saw how much they enjoyed dressing this way and moving around like females. It confirmed a belief—that buried in many actors is the desire to impersonate women.

**SS:** One last question. If a hundred years from now only a couple for your movies survived, which survivors would most please you?

**CS:** Who cares? I never look at my pictures. I've never picked up a book that I've written in my life, because I would know how to make it better. But there comes a time, a time to move on...



# THE BEAST WITH FIVE FINGERS

A Five Finger Exercise by Ken Hanke

The disembodied hand is one of the creepiest of all horror concepts. There's something utterly surreal about the image, something unsettling in a way that more traditional monsters are not.

The surrealism is not surprising, since a severed hand figured in the Luis Bunuel/Salvador Dali film, *UN CHIEN ANDALOU* (1927), before it made it into a horror film. Indeed, it wasn't until Curt Siodmak came up with *THE BEAST WITH FIVE FINGERS* in 1946 that the self-propelled hand made it to the screen, even though the concept of a hand with a mind of its own was hardly new. (1935's *MAD LOVE* is but one example.)

Despite frequent critical reservations about the resulting film, *THE BEAST WITH FIVE FINGERS*—as written by Siodmak, directed by Robert Florey, scored by Max Steiner, and performed by a largely impeccable cast—not only remains the best film in this subgenre, but is the last wholly serious and successful horror film of the forties. The fact that Warner Bros. opted to take on so late a horror project—and one that was definitely a cut above a B picture in execution—is certainly strange. That they gave it over to Robert Florey to direct is stranger still.

One of the most frustrating of all filmmakers, Robert Florey isn't invariably thought of as a horror specialist, yet his best remembered work (excluding his codirectorial chores on 1929's *THE COCOANUTS*) is either in the horror or mystery genre. Indeed, his first Hollywood feature, *THE HOLE IN THE WALL* (1929) with Claudette Colbert and Edward G. Robinson, was a Browningsque tale of a phony psychic racket, but with the difference that Florey's film boasted a genuine supernatural aspect. It was probably this film that led Florey to be assigned by Universal to make *FRANKENSTEIN*—until he was, of course, supplanted by James Whale in what was the greatest blow to his career.

Florey recovered sufficiently to make one of Universal's strangest films, *MURDERS IN THE RUE MORGUE* (1932). While the film is Florey's most completely successful work, it underscores many of the director's weaknesses—primarily, a lack of dramatic sense, a penchant for atmosphere and symbolism over narrative, heavyhanded humor in anything but macabre touches, and the sense that normalcy is utterly foreign to him. (Florey's most believable and moving film, 1941's *THE FACE BEHIND THE MASK*, centers on two characters who are anything but traditionally normal.)

The lack of box-office success for *RUE MORGUE* seriously damaged Florey's standing, and he spent most of his career turning out B pictures. Some—*THE PREVIEW MURDER MYSTERY* (1935), *THE FLORENTINE DAGGER*

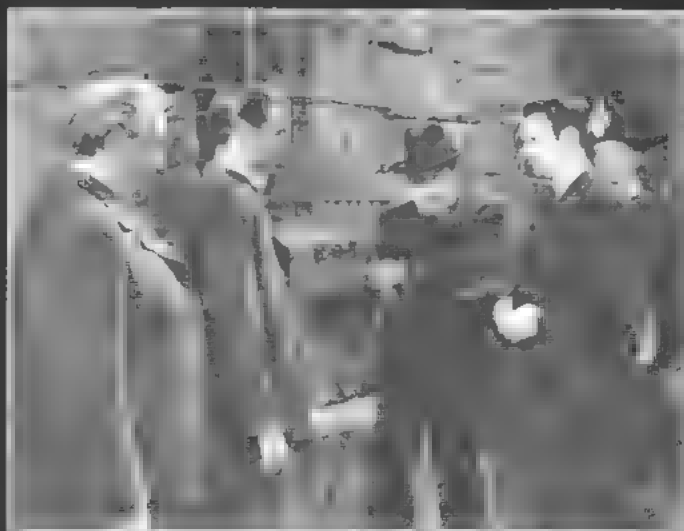
(1935)—were quite good and showed Florey to be well attuned to off-center projects. Artistically, he was well suited to *THE BEAST WITH FIVE FINGERS*, though he brought his weaknesses to the project as well as his strengths. Still, Florey had spent most of the forties grinding out what were clearly program pictures—the preachy propaganda of *GOD IS MY CO-PILOT* (1945) being a notable exception—and *BEAST* was undeniably a plum assignment.

Most of *THE BEAST WITH FIVE FINGERS'* virtues and faults rest with Siodmak's screenplay, which, though offering the illusion of originality, is essentially a reworking of a number of standard horror themes. Set in an Old Dark House in a mythical Italian village, the story is set up more like a thriller than a horror film—which actually plays fair, since it essentially is a thriller. For reasons never adequately explained—indeed, never explained at all—this isolated community is largely populated by American and other expatriates, atmospheric superstitious peasant extras, and a few characters who seem like refugees from an especially bad comic opera. Unfortunately, one of these last is the central figure of Commissario Castanio, played at his most annoying by J. Carol Naish as a cross between one of Harold Huber's excitable French characters and Chico Marx. More than anything, this damages the film and trades heavily on the sort of comedy that Florey was incapable of handling, his experience with the real Chico notwithstanding. A broad comic characterization, J. Carol Naish with a stage Italian accent, and Florey at the helm—now, that's a triple threat!

Still, the screenplay is clever, full-blooded melodrama when it sticks to the Old Dark House; its embittered, crippled, and libidinous ruler, the pianist Francis Ingram (Victor Francen); his secretary and "court astrologer" Hilary Cummins (Peter Lorre); an unorthodox last will and testament; greedy relatives; and other requisite trappings. Cleverly, Siodmak takes these elements and slightly skews them. Ingram's will







**PAGE 34 TOP:** Julie Holden (Andrea King) is rudely given the finger—five of ‘em!—when she opens Francis Ingram’s safe. **PAGE 34 BOTTOM:** Hilary Cummings (Peter Lorre) contemplates the helping hand he’s received in plotting murder. **LEFT:** The suspicious relatives (Charles Dingle and John Alvin) and the suspicious cop (J. Carrol Naish) question suspect Bruce Conrad (Robert Alda). **RIGHT:** Hilary has trapped the hand—or has he?

coupled with the abusive or lecherous (depending on the target) approach the pianist takes with everyone, is the sort of thing normally associated with murder mysteries, where an unpleasant character spends the first reel just begging to be bumped off. The surprise here is that Ingram’s death—a wonderful, almost Expressionist set piece—is never suggested to be anything but an accident!

Similarly, with Hilary, Siodmak puts a different spin on the horror staple of the mad scientist. Maddier than George Zucco facing a roomful of skeptical fellow scientists, Lorre—boasting a weird peach-fuzz haircut that makes him look for all the world like a demented version of a Ken Doll—is the mad doc as mad academic. Realizing that the possible departure of Ingram’s nurse, Julie (Andrea King), means Ingram will turn his attention to him (there’s an undercurrent that suggests something unspoken about the relationship between Ingram and Hilary) and interfere with his researches, Hilary urges her to stay. “If you go, what will happen to my work? If you leave, he won’t let me out of his sight! I need every minute of the day for my work! I have to stay right here in this library—in these books in these shelves are the great secrets I’m after. The key to the future was known only to the ancient astrologers. It’s been lost since the burning of the Alexandrian library. Now I—I am about to rediscover them! If I’m left alone just a little while longer, I’ll have it. Please stay! You must stay till I find it!” It’s as gloriously loopy as any tirade ever afforded the maddest of mad doctors.

Fearful of the contents of his employer’s will, Hilary tries to drive a wedge between Ingram and Julie by revealing that she and Bruce Conrad (Robert Alda) are more than good friends and that Conrad is urging Julie to leave.

Ingram: Hilary, why do you lie to me?

Hilary: I’m not lying. I’m telling you the truth.

Ingram: No. The truth is that you don’t want anybody around here close to me!

Hilary: I heard what they said in the garden. I couldn’t help but hear them!

Ingram: You are a liar!

Hilary: You must listen to me! I even remember what they said! He said, “He’s had his life. You have the right to yours.” And she said, “Yes, I’ll have to go.” He took her in his arms and he kissed her! He kissed her! Do you hear? He kissed her!”

All Hilary receives for his pains is a near strangling by Ingram’s one powerful hand, causing him to call for Julie.

“She can’t hear you, Hilary. She’s out in the garden, isn’t she? She’s out in the garden with Bruce Conrad. She couldn’t hear me, so how could she possibly hear you?”), followed by his banishment. Before Hilary’s departure can take place, though, Ingram dies in an accident on the staircase. All seems well, until greedy relatives Raymond and Donald Arlington (Charles Dingle and John Alvin) coerce venal lawyer Duprex (David Hoffman) into breaking the will that leaves everything to Julie. While in the process of carrying out their plan, Duprex is murdered—seemingly by Ingram’s hand!

These are excellent sequences, showing Florey at his stylistic best. The sets may be more traditionally realistic than those of *MURDERS IN THE RUE MORGUE*, but they are lit and shot in such a way that they become as Caligari-esque as *RUE MORGUE*’s more deliberately psychological sets. Similarly, the search of Ingram’s crypt, the discovery of his missing hand, and the fact that a window in the crypt has been smashed from the inside (“And yet no one could possibly climb through a jagged little opening like that”) is deftly accomplished, while the revelation that all that leads from the crypt are the apparent prints of a crawling hand is genuinely unsettling. “The print of a hand. It broke the window and climbed through,” opines the Commissioner, with Bruce cynically adding, “Then walked away.” (Unfortunately, this is followed by Naish’s immortal, “In my mind, there is a no doubt the hand is walking around.”) After the hand makes an attempt on Donald Arlington, Hilary’s shaky sanity completely shatters.

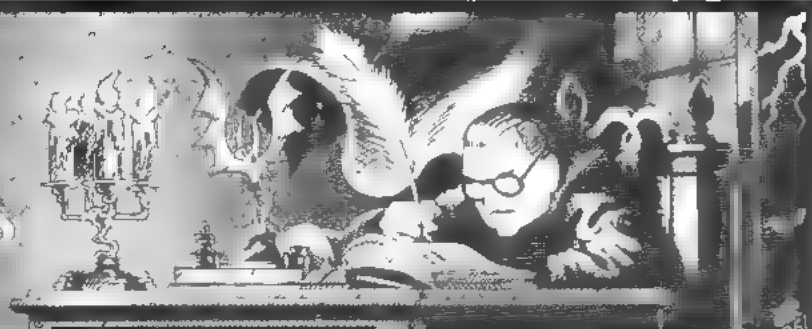
In the film’s most surreal and celebrated sequences, Hilary has several encounters with the amazing ambulatory hand. Whatever else may be said about *BEAST*, the scenes involving Lorre and the hand retain their weird power to this day—and the combined efforts of Siodmak and Lorre produce wonderfully memorable mad rants on the topic. After the first encounter, Hilary rushes to find Bruce and Julie, prattling, “Down there in the library—the hand, it crawled on my desk! It picked up the ring! I saw it with my own eyes! It’s alive! I tell you it’s alive!” Of course, there’s no sign of it when he tries to show them.

For a film often thought a cheat, the script plays pretty fair with the audience, cluing us in right away that there ain’t no such thing as a mobile severed hand with a mind of its own. When the threesome find a piece of paper on which the hand has apparently written a phrase used by Ingram, Bruce is skeptical.

*Continued on page 77*

# Crimson Chronicles

by **Forrest J Ackerman**



## Heard About Hurd?

"He was haunted all his life," says his friend Curtis Harrington, "by the success of his role as Donan in *THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY*." In other words, as the world always thought first of Bela Lugosi as Dracula and Boris Karloff was first and foremost Frankenstein's Monster and to a lesser degree Edward Van Sloan and Dwight Frye were associated with their horror roles of Van Helsing and Renfield, so Hurd Hatfield was always recognized as, "Oh, yes, Dorian Gray."

Like "damnyankee" was pronounced as one word in the south after the Civil War, "Psycho" became Robert Bloch's middle name and Hurd simply couldn't shake Dorian.

Filmmaker Harrington, who cast me as Basil Rathbone's assistant in *QUEEN OF BLOOD* and introduced me to Florence Marley, an actress who became a dear friend toward the end of her life (I saw her laid to rest in a golden casket and visited her brother some years later in what was then Czechoslovakia)—Curtis did me the favor of bringing Hurd to my home one time when, as near as we can recreate it, Hatfield must have been in his early sixties. Hatfield looked more like 40! I took him upstairs to a room where I had a painting by Anton Brzezinski of him as Dorian Gray and kidded him that he was only growing old in the Ackermansion, not the outside world.

I wish I had more to share with you readers of *Scarlet Street*, but that is the extent of my knowledge of and relationship with the actor who ended his last days in Ireland at 82, but will remain forever young in his fans' memories and the film that immortalized him, Oscar Wilde's *THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY*.

Across the years, Hurd, youthful and unforgettable in our hearts . . .

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Was my face scarlet! At Chillercon, I was inscribing autografotos of the Ackermmonster when out of the blue (or out of the red) this fabulous bundle of beauty with 99% bare bulging "fronta lobes" plumped her pulchritudinous person down on my lap and thrust an amazingly tattooed arm under my eyes. For a moment it distracted my gaze from her upper more-so torso—because it was a full-length montage from my favorite scientifiilmasterpiece that I had just viewed for the 97th time—with live musical accompaniment—at Hollywood's Cult Movie Con: METROPOLIS! On her bare arm was a perfect replica of the head of Ultima Futura Automa-

tion and above her the towering supercity of 60 million souls.

"Yoicks!" I Ackscleamed "you gotta will me this arm for my collection! At least give me a foto of it!" As she departed I noted as did we all—her bottom was bare! She returned shortly with a color 8X10 inscribed, "To Forry! Thanks for turning me into a freak Calugula." She was flesh and blood, no robotronix, that was for sure!

At the Chillercon, I was presented with a copy of *SILENT INVASION*, a Cana-



The one, true Dr. Ackula cavorts with a gift from *Scarlet Street*'s Richard Valley and Tom Amorosi: a pith helmet emblazoned "SaForry Ackerman!"

dian-made saucer cinema in which I have two brief appearances as, according to our Cast of Characters, The Old Man. Hey, I'm only 84, but aging rapidly with encounters like that with Calugula! *SILENT INVASION* is unique in that not a word is spoken but it does have clever sound effects and an attractive musical score. It's dedicated to Buster Keaton, Santo, Josh Kirby, and Ed Wood. You can probably pick up a copy at your local videoshop.

At both Chiller and Cult cons I repeated my Claude Rains/Colin Clive *INVISIBLE MAN*/FRANKENSTEIN scenes with an audience volunteer as Flora ("My darling") and Dr. Waldman ("And you really believe you can bring life to the dead?"). The performances were so well received I've had requests to repeat them at future conventions. If word leaks around about my singing debut with accompaniment at Cult Con, I may be asked to repeat "April Showers" and "Baby

Face" a la Al Jolson. Cult cosponsors Coco Olson and Michael Copner declared I was the nit of the convention. Well, at least Ray Bradbury, Curtis Harrington, Anne Hardin, Brad Linaweaver, Karen Black, Jeff Roberts, Ann Robinson, Ed Wood's wife, and Yvette Vickers didn't throw eggs. Flatteringly, I was given two Lifetime Achievement Awards, one from Cult Movies and the other from Science Fiction.com. Ray Bradbury, Curtis Harrington, and Bela G. Lugosi (he prefers it to Jr.) were also the recipients of awards.

I don't want to make it sound like I'm bragging; I confess in China three years ago I was a flop. Lily Jasmine, the Fanne Princess of the Orient, insisted I go up on an open-air stage and sing! I was as embarrassed as a shy guy caught bare-assed at a nudist convention, but I gave it the old college try with "Baby Face," prepared to follow with "Rock-a-Bye" if the applause was appropriate. The silence was deafening. I'll never know did the Asian audience just not dig a Western song or didn't they understand the words or (multiple choice) was I just plain lousy? Among the one billion, two hundred million Chinese perhaps five or 10 didn't get my autograph; I may have to go back—but not to sing. (They wanted my autograph because they misunderstood and thought I was one of the astronauts or cosmonauts.)

And in Berlin late last year, I was *The Invisible Man*. They flew me over first class and put me up in a five-star hotel next to Marlene Dietrich Place, and I didn't have to spend a pfennig for anything—but there were no newspaper interviews for me, no radio, no television, no nothin'! All the way across the Atlantic I rehearsed in my mind a speech for the opening of the magnificent block-wide, eight-story filmuseum with 24 pieces of my collection on display, including the pteranodon that was trying to fly away with Fay Wray, a bust of Nosferatu, Robur the Conqueror's airship (*MASTER OF THE WORLD*), the child star from 2010, and golden movie shoes of Marlene Dietrich. But with Marlene's daughter, Ray Harryhausen, Roman Polanski, Lopita Tovar (Spanish 1931 *DRACULA*), and other celebrities in the jam-packed audience, I was completely ignored! Donnerwetter! Or, if you prefer Esperanto, Shakatabulo! I felt lonelier than the time I was stranded on the Island of Lost Souls! (At least there I had Charles Laughton and

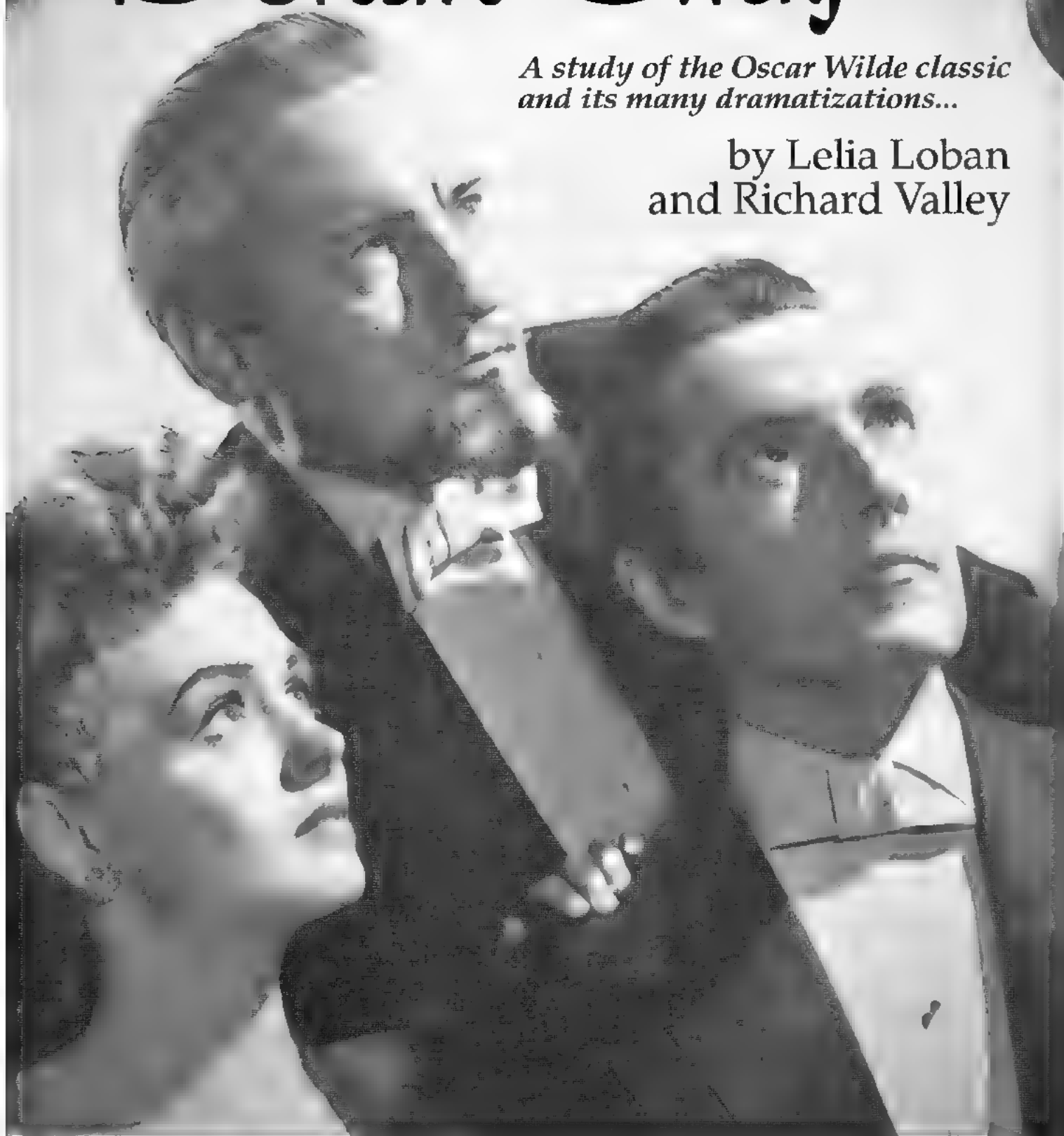
Continued on page 78



# The Pictures of Dorian Gray

*A study of the Oscar Wilde classic  
and its many dramatizations...*

by Lelia Loban  
and Richard Valley





*"There is no such thing as a moral or an immoral book. Books are well written, or badly written. That is all."*

—Oscar Wilde

**O**n March 1, 1945, at New York's Roxy Theatre, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer premiered its sleek, lavish production of *THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY*, written and directed by Albert Lewin and based on the notorious 1890 novel by Oscar Wilde about a man who remains forever young while his portrait ages. The nearly \$2 million film—budgeted at \$1,129,969, completed at a cost of \$1,918,168.38—starred George Sanders, Donna Reed, Peter Lawford, Angela Lansbury, and in the role of Dorian, a delicately handsome actor named Hurd Hatfield. Hatfield was 28 years old. Appropriately, he looked younger.

Nineteen days later, at around four in the morning on March 20, 1945, the man who was remembered—incorrectly—as the true-life inspiration for the blonde, blue-eyed, beautiful Dorian of Wilde's book, died of heart failure. Lord Alfred Bruce Douglas (pictured on this page from childhood to old age), Bosie to family, friends, lovers, and finally the world, was 75. He looked very much like Dorian Gray's portrait might have looked—not at its unveiling, but after it had been hidden from prying eyes and absorbed the years and sins of its all too human model.

If the film's director was aware of Bosie's death, he never remarked on it—and Albert Lewin wasn't known for his reticence. No Dorian himself—he was five feet tall and

stocky, and owlishly professorial in glasses—Lewin was one of Hollywood's rare eggheads and widely scorned for it, not least by MGM mogul Louis B. Mayer. It hardly helped that Lewin was outspoken about his intellectual supereminence, or that he counted among his personal friends such lofty luminaries as director Jean Renoir, writer Anita Loos, composer Herbert Stothart, explorer Peter Freuchen, poet Charles Reznikoff, art collector Peggy Guggenheim, and artist Man Ray. He was working for a studio where a weightier social contact would have been Lassie.

Born in Brooklyn on September 23, 1894 (less than seven months before Oscar Wilde's trials and imprisonment for homosexual practices), Lewin graduated from New York University in 1915 with a bachelor's degree in literature. Winner of the university's Sandham Prize for oration, he won a scholarship to Harvard, where he earned a master's degree in English literature in 1916. In 1921, Lewin, by then teaching English lit himself, gained employment as a script reader for that legendary mangler of the language, Samuel ("Include me out!") Goldwyn. Lewin moved to Metro Pictures as a scriptwriter in 1924, ironically dogged by his old boss when Goldwyn's company merged with Metro and Louis B. Mayer Productions to form Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Promotions followed at regular intervals, first to head of MGM's story department, then to the position of Irving Thalberg's personal assistant, then to associate producer or producer of such films as *THE KISS* (1929, Greta Garbo's last silent picture), *DEVIL-MAY-CARE* (1929, Ramon Novarro's first talkie), *THE GUARDSMAN* (1931,







**LEFT:** An illustration for the German *DAS BILDNIS DES DORIAN GRAY* (1917), a Richard Oswald production. Oswald had already produced a film version of Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Hound of the Baskervilles* and Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. **RIGHT:** Young, innocent Dorian Gray (Hurd Hatfield) is led astray by the wicked wit of Lord Henry Wotton (George Sanders, much to the consternation of Basil Hallward (Lowell Gilmore). The opening sequence from Albert Lewin's *THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY* (1945).

Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne's sole starring film), *CHINA SEAS* (1935), *MUTINY ON THE BOUNTY* (1935), and *THE GOOD EARTH* (1937).

By the time *THE GOOD EARTH* graced the screen, Lewin, spurred on by Thalberg's death in 1936 and Mayer's hostility, had left MGM for Paramount. Dissatisfied with the projects forced on him by his new studio (the d.m. highlight being the 1937 Carole Lombard comedy *TRUE CONFESION*), Lewin quit in 1940 and set about realizing his ambition to become an independent producer. Partnered with

David Lowe in Loew Lewin Productions, Lewin produced *SO ENDS OUR NIGHT* (1941) and consequently found himself grilled before the House of Representatives for fostering American involvement in the European war. Loew and Lewin scored a hit with their second production, *THE MOON AND SIXPENCE* (1942), which also marked the latter's debut as a director and his first professional encounter with Hollywood's preeminent cad, George Sanders. Never prolific, Lewin helmed only five additional features, including the fantasy *PANDORA AND THE FLYING*

**LEFT:** Some 14 years before making Universal's *DRACULA* (1931), Bela Lugosi (leering behind the seated Norbert Dan) was already trotting out his patented demonic expressions in *THE ROYAL LIFE* (1917), also known as *THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY*. Lugosi (acting as Arisztid Olt) played either Lord Henry Wotton or Dorian's butler. The artist was played by Gusztáv Turán. **RIGHT:** Another version of the novel's opening scene, in which Dorian poses for Basil Hallward. This is the "modernized" *DORIAN GRAY* (1970), with Richard Todd as the artist and Helmut Berger (looking more like a hustler than an aristocrat) as the object d'art.



DUTCHMAN (1951). THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY, which improbably returned him to MGM and the loving embrace of Mayer, was the first and most famous

The search for an actor to play Dorian Gray, though not as crazed as the one for Scarlett O'Hara, proved difficult. Robert Taylor, Gregory Peck, Montgomery Clift, and even Greta Garbo were seriously considered for the role. Lewin eventually cast Hurd Hatfield, who, unlike Taylor and Peck (though not Clift and Garbo), projected an androgynous quality suitable to Wilde's character. In an October 1946 *View* critique titled "Dorian Gray: Last of the Movie Draculas," Parker Tyler wrote: "Mr. Hatfield's face and manner of speaking strongly suggested the romantic adolescent style of Katharine Hepburn . . . Not only does Hurd Hatfield create the first male erotic somnambule who is a beauty rather than a Dracula, or such as the denizen of Caligari's cabinet, but he is the first Great Lover who, despite all Hollywood handicaps, manages to seem more loved than loving . . . For the meaning of Dorian's life is that he is the detached object of love, not its subject, the beloved, not the lover."

Tyler's analysis speaks volumes not only for Wilde's literary creation, but for its presumed prototype, Lord Alfred Douglas. Though he sought and for a time gained a reputation as one of England's great poets, Bosie's ultimate place in history was as one of its most famous love objects—though hardly a detached one. His volatile family background, rife with impetuosity and madness, made it quite impossible for Bosie to remain passive toward anything for very long.

Faced with the Douglas family history as set forth in Douglas Murray's *Bosie: A Biography of Lord Alfred Douglas* (Hyperion, 2000), one can hardly be blamed for thinking of the ill-fated d'Ascoyne family of *KIND HEARTS AND CORONETS* (1949) or the series of fatal disasters that launch *THE WRONG BOX* (1966). Sir William Douglas died in 1298 in the Tower of London. William "the Black Douglas" was killed by the Moors in 1390, while traveling across Spain with the heart of Robert the Bruce, his friend and king, whose dying wish was that his heart be taken to Jerusalem in a silver casket. In 1707, "idiot from birth" James (son of the second Duke of Queensberry) gained fame (and several pounds, perhaps) when he broke loose from his cell at Holyrood Palace and made his way to the kitchen, where he murdered a cook's boy, impaled him on a spit, and roasted him. His younger brother, the third Duke, lost a son when the young man's pistol exploded while he was loading it against a feared attack by highwaymen. (The highwaymen failed to put in an appearance.) Another accidental explosion and death occurred in 1858, when the seventh Marquess, Bosie's grandfather, shot himself instead of a rabbit. (Suicide was hinted at in the press—the Marquess', not the rabbit's.) His son Francis died in 1865 when he unhappily found himself tied to two men who had just fallen off the Matterhorn. Another son, John Sholto, became the notorious eighth Marquess of Queensberry—father of Lord Alfred Douglas and the architect of Oscar Wilde's ruin.

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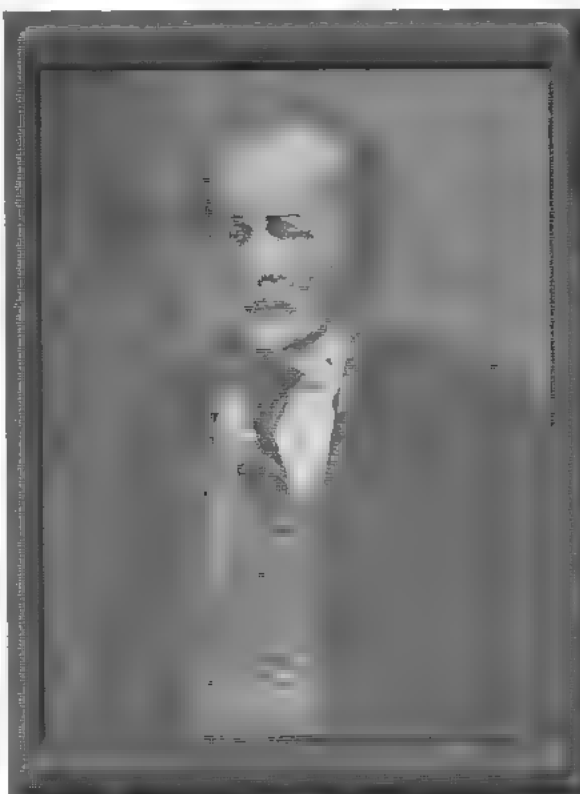
"I'll be a poet, a writer, a dramatist. Somehow or other I'll be famous, and if I'm not famous, I'll be notorious."

—Oscar Wilde

The second son of Sir William and Lady Jane Wilde, Oscar O'Flahertie Fingal Wills Wilde was born in Dublin, Ireland on October 16, 1854. Sir William was a noted eye and ear surgeon and Lady Jane a poet, known by her pen name of Speranza. In 1878, Wilde arrived in London with a degree from Oxford and set about making a name for himself—a bevy of names, in fact, and not all of them pleasant. Taught flamboyance at his mother's knee, Wilde's greatest artistic triumph during this period was his own person, neither his first play (1880's *VERA, OR THE NIHILISTS*) or his early poetry finding much success.

For all his flaunting of society's conventions, Wilde's early manhood was entirely heterosexual in nature. He fell in love with a young Dublin woman named Florence Balcombe and they became engaged. Florence, perhaps sensing that Oscar wasn't the best marriage material, broke off the engagement. In 1880, she wed the secretary of actor/manager Henry Irving, Bram Stoker, who in 1897 unleashed a vile Victorian monster surpassing even Dorian Gray in fame—the immortal vampire, Count Dracula! Stoker proved a worshipful husband. Unfortunately—and perhaps betraying a sexual orientation not unlike that ultimately embraced by Wilde—the primary object of Stoker's worship was Henry Irving, not Florence.

Deserted by Florence Balcombe, Oscar Wilde still claimed respectability when he found himself happily married (to Constance Lloyd in 1884) with children (Cyril and Vyvyan, born in 1885 and 1886, respectively). Then, a mere two years into his union, the 33-year-old Wilde was seduced by 17-year-old Robbie Ross, a slight, boyish student briefly staying with the Wildes at their house in Tite Street. (Ross would prove to be Wilde's most loyal friend and champion, becoming the author's literary ex-

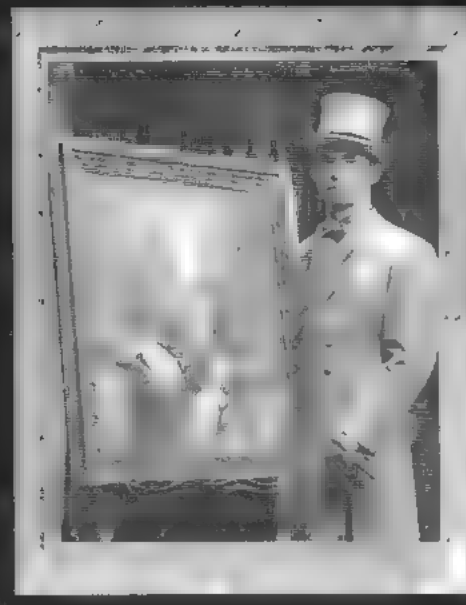


Dorian Gray is never seen in this manner in the 1945 Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer film. Instead, he's found dead and decayed on the playroom floor.

ecutor after his death and arranging to have his own ashes interred in Wilde's Paris grave.)

The liberation of Wilde's homosexual urges apparently freed his creativity, and he proceeded, in his own words, to "disturb the monotony of type, slavery of custom, tyranny of habit, and reduction of man to the level of machine." He produced a remarkable series of short stories (1887's "The Canterville Ghost" and 1891's "Lord Arthur Savile's Crime"), fairy tales (1888's "The Happy Prince"), essays (1891's "The Decay of Lying"), and a novel. This last was the outcome of a dinner with Arthur Conan Doyle and J. M. Stoddard, the Philadelphia publisher of *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine*. Stoddard sought short novels for his publication and, before the end of the evening, made arrangements for contributions from both Conan Doyle and Wilde. The results were *The Sign of Four* (Conan Doyle's second Sherlock Holmes mystery, published in 1890) and *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.

Continued on page 42



Here are a handful of the many faces of Dorian Gray. TOP ROW: the painting of Helmut Berger (surely this is what Oscar Wilde had in mind) from *DORIAN GRAY* (1970), Hurd Hatfield in the 1945 MCM production, Belinda Bauer in the gender-switching 1983 television, and Dennis Wayne in a Cris Alexander photograph (substituting for a painting) used by the Joffrey Ballet in their version of Wilde's novel, retitled *DOUBLE EXPOSURE* (1972). BOTTOM ROW: Benedick Bates in a 1994 stage production, Shane Briant in the 1973 Dan Curtis TV production, and Jeremy Brett in a 1960 British TV version.







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LEFT: T. J. Escott played Dorian Gray and Jay Robinson (best known as Caligula in 1953's *THE ROBE* and 1954's *DEMETER* AND *THE GLADIATORS*) was Lord Henry Wotton in one of many stage productions of *THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY*, this one at New York's Showboat Theatre in 1963. CENTER: In 1994, Benedick Bates and Tim Pigott-Smith took the roles of Dorian and Basil Hallward. RIGHT: Looking more than a little Nixonian with his five o'clock shadow, William Broderick played Dorian in *DORIAN*, a 1990 musical version of Wilde's novel, with Kyle Waters as Sybil Vane. PAGE 43: Peter Firth (pictured Top Right in his famous stage and screen role in *EQUUS*) played Dorian in a 1976 British televersion, opposite former TV Dorian Jeremy Brett as Basil Hallward.

#### THE PICTURES OF DORIAN GRAY

*Continued from page 39*

It is accepted fact that Sherlock Holmes was based in part on one of Conan Doyle's teachers at the University of Edinburgh Medical School, Dr. Joseph Bell, just as it is accepted fact that Bosie Douglas served as the inspiration for Dorian Gray—but in the latter case accepted fact is entirely unacceptable. In truth, Wilde's novel was published a year before author and "inspiration" ever met!

Who, then, was the real Dorian Gray? The candidates are many. Following his assignation with Robbie Ross, Wilde made the acquaintance of countless young men, in many different walks of life—including streetwalks. Still, his favorite before Bosie Douglas' arrival on the scene was not a male prostitute, but a handsome, blonde, 23-year-old post-office clerk named Gray—John Gray.

That Wilde christened his literary fancy with the surname of his then-current amour is likely. (John Gray, handsome and blonde, took to signing his letters to Wilde "Dorian.") That Dorian Gray was otherwise based on the young clerk is questionable, however, though it's hardly as great a stretch of the imagination as another suspect . . .

Jack the Ripper!

According to theorist Thomas Toughill, the infamous Victorian mass murderer was Frank Miles, a gay portrait artist who once roomed for a year (August 1880 to August 1881) with Oscar Wilde. He and Wilde parted ways in 1881, possibly over difficulties relating to Miles' penchant for exposing himself to young girls, after which Miles began a rapid descent into madness. He was committed to an insane asylum in 1887, and the following year his death was announced in a publication called *Magazine of Art*. The Ripper murders began later that year, so Miles, being dead, would seem a rather unlikely candidate for the list of suspects. However, Toughill has established that Miles died of general paralysis of the insane four years later, in 1891. He argues—"very persuasively," according to Donald Rumbelow in *The Complete Jack the Ripper* (1975)—that Dorian was based on Miles, but fails to offer credible evidence that Wilde knew Miles was the Ripper, or that he dropped clues in his novel, such as Dorian's murder of Basil Hallward with a knife. Richard Ellmann notes in his biography *Oscar Wilde* (A. Fred A. Knopf, 1988) that, when they argued and decided to live apart, Wilde told Miles, "Very well then, I will leave you. I will go now and I will never speak to you again as long as I live." In *The Picture of Dorian Gray*,

Dorian threatens Basil by saying "on my word of honour I will never speak to you again as long as I live."

Was Oscar Wilde's former roommate Jack the Ripper? And was he the source for Dorian Gray? It seems inconceivable—but it's worth noting that Frank Miles, like Dorian Gray, was handsome, blonde, and no stranger to homosexual walks on the Wilde side.

Dorian Gray's literary antecedents are easier to trace, with critics past and present tracing Wilde's inspiration to such diverse writers as Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1808's *Faust*), Charles Robert Maturin (1820's *Melmoth the Wanderer*), Honoré de Balzac (1831's *The Wild Ass's Skin*), Nathaniel Hawthorne (1838's "Edward Randolph's Portrait"), Edgar Allan Poe (1839's "William Wilson"), Hans Christian Andersen (1847's "The Shadow") and Robert Louis Stevenson (1886's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*). Gothic fantasy in general influenced Wilde. He sniffed at the stuff in public, but he mentioned so much specific detail about so many gothics that it's obvious he gobbled them up, the way modern literati watch trash on the boob tube.

The tale Wilde spins is in the tradition of the doppelgänger (German for "double walker"), fantastic tales in which an individual encounters his mirror image. In most cases the purpose of this twin is to expose the individual's true self, be it good or evil, which he seeks to hide from the world. The double is the original's Jimmy Cricket, his conscience. Dorian Gray's doppelgänger happens to be a painting by Basil Hallward, an artist secretly enamored of his subject. (Hallward's desire is never directly addressed, but even a cursory reading of the book's subtext renders it apparent.) Egged on by Lord Henry Wotton, whose casually wicked philosophy intrigues him ("The only way to get rid of a temptation is to yield to it"), Dorian wishes that his portrait might age and show the ravages of time and experience while he himself remains young and becoming—and gets his wish! Years pass, during which time Dorian woos the actress Sybil Vane and drives her to suicide, ruins the reputations of several gentlemen, murders Hallward, and indirectly precipitates the death of Sybil's vengeful brother. Meanwhile, the portrait lays bare each passing hour, each casual sin. Driven to the brink of madness by its silent disapproval, Dorian stabs his double. A cry of agony summons the servants, and, in Wilde's words:

"When they entered they found, hanging upon the wall, a splendid portrait of their master as they had last



seen him, in all the wonder of his exquisite youth and beauty. Lying on the floor was a dead man, in evening dress, with a knife in his heart. He was withered, wrinkled, and loathsome of visage. It was not till they had examined the rings that they recognised who it was."

Why does Dorian die when he stabs his own portrait? In *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Wilde taps into the primitive (possibly instinctive) fear of a mirror or an artistic image as a soul-snatching device. In the shamanic tradition (documented in paleolithic archaeological sites in Europe and elsewhere, and still practiced today), a picture, a doll, or an object closely associated with a person can substitute for that person in magical ritual. This ritual twin can reveal the truth about things the real person would rather hide, or the double might clandestinely dominate someone, by usurping the part of the soul that governs free will. The controlling shaman might want to harm or to help—to stab pins in the double or to souse it with Love Potion Number Nine—but either way, what's done to the simulacrum is supposed to happen, at least symbolically, to the person it represents. That's why Dorian dies: he acts both as the shaman and as the victim of sympathetic magic.

The source chronologically closest to Wilde was *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, and, 51 years later, Stevenson's much-filmed cautionary tale may actually have helped pave the way for Albert Lewin's *THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY*. In 1941—a mere two years before Lewin began to develop his version of Wilde's story—MGM, a studio considerably more comfortable with Andy Hardy than Edward Hyde, produced a fine, underrated *DR JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE*, directed by Victor Fleming and starring Spencer Tracy in the title roles, Ingrid Bergman as the barmaid Ivy, and Lana Turner as Jekyll's intended bride. Meanwhile, over at horror-happy Universal, Wilde's "Lord Arthur Savile's Crime" found its way into *FLESH AND FANTASY* (1943), an omnibus film directed by Julien Duvivier. The segment, updated but true to the spirit of the original, starred Edward G. Robinson as a man whose destiny it is to commit murder, Thomas Mitchell as the prophetic bearer of the grim prognostication, and Dame May Whitty and C. Aubrey Smith as potential victims, all in top form. That same year, another spirit broke Wildean ground back at MGM: *THE CANTERVILLE GHOST* played

host to a company of American G.I. Joes, in a considerably altered version of the short story featuring Charles Laughton as the deceased, future *FATHER KNOWS BEST* stalwart Robert Young as one of the Yanks, and dainty little Margaret O'Brien as the dainty little possessor of the haunted castle.

Clearly, it was the right time for Dorian Gray's return to the silver screen, for the first time in 27 years

\*\*\*

"For, try as we may, we cannot get behind the appearance of things to reality. And the terrible reason may be that there is no reality in the things apart from their appearances."

—Oscar Wilde

The history of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* on film does not begin with the 1945 MGM production. At least nine silent movie versions were released between 1899 and 1918. How irresistible this story must have looked to the pioneers of moving pictures! If a simple portrait or doll can embody such power over the individual it represents, how much more power resides in an image that can move and talk—that can simulate a real person well enough to fool the viewer?



French stage illusionist and film pioneer Georges Méliès grasped that idea as early as 1899, with *LE PORTRAIT MYSTÉRIEUX* (known in English as *A MYSTERIOUS PORTRAIT*). Méliès produced, wrote the scenario, directed, and starred in this silent, for Star Film. The movie, number 196 in the Star Film catalogue, is only 65 feet long, or about one minute. Sure that's too short for much of a plot, maybe it's reaching to claim this as a Dorian Gray movie. Still, Wilde's influence is too obvious to ignore. Though this isn't a horror story, it expresses the idea of the picture reflecting a person's soul, and extends that idea to the new medium of film.

According to John Frazer's synopsis in *Artificially Arranged Scenes: The Films of Georges Méliès* (G. K. Hall & Co., 1979), Méliès the director begins by rolling up a painted backdrop, of "a pastoral scene," to reveal "another scene, a medieval town." Méliès the actor then sits down next to what looks like a large, framed canvas—actually a movie screen, mounted in a fancy, gilded frame. In this early example of a matte shot, a portrait of Méliès, dressed identically, seems to emerge as if by magic on the blank canvas. The man and his double scrutinize each other and pantomime a conversation, Méliès patting his double's head to point out their shared baldness. The image then blurs and vanishes. Frazer comments, "Méliès was reveling in the devices of filmmaking, making the appreciation of his cleverness the actual subject. With the impossible doubling of his own image he demonstrated that the film itself was the new sorcery whose transfigurations go beyond anything invented on the stage."

In only one minute, Méliès suggests several of the most crucial elements at the root of Wilde's story. The picture looks exactly like the subject, yet the copy is no inanimate object. Unlike a mirror, it doesn't simply ape what the "real" man does—it has a life of its own. It acts independently, reflecting not only the outward image the man wants to project, but also something of the inner man.

Dozens of silent movies about magical portraits and mistaken identity (portraits mistaken for living people or vice-versa) draw on this basic concept, but the first movie to make direct use of Oscar Wilde's characters and story probably comes from a Danish production company, Regia Art Film. According to the Danish copyright registry, *DORIAN GRAY'S PORTRAIT* (aka *THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY*, *DORIAN GRAY'S PORTRAIT*, and *DORIAN GRAY'S BILDNISS*) premiered on October 6, 1910, at the Panoptikontheatret in Copenhagen. Most of Regia's movies were art films of literary subjects. Though the thriving Danish movie industry turned out approximately 1,700 silent movies between 1903 and 1930, Regia lasted only one season, producing about a dozen movies in 1910 before most of the personnel moved to more commercial studios. Axel Strøm directed this short subject (1,558 feet, between 15 and 20 minutes long), with Mada Anton Madsen as cinematographer. Adam Poulsen starred as Dorian Gray. Valdemar Psilander played either Lord Henry Wotton or Basil Hallward. Clara Wieth played Sybil Vane, with Axel Strøm and Henrik Malberg in supporting roles. Apparently, the movie followed the basic outline of Wilde's plot.

*DORIAN GRAY'S PORTRAIT* is probably lost. Critics of Danish film remember it mainly for giving Psilander his first screen role, even though they don't agree about which role he played! Soon afterwards, *AT THE PRISON GATES* (1911) made Psilander a major movie star. Psilander, formerly of the Dagmar Theatre, successfully scaled down his stage performing technique for the camera and won praise for his natural, convincing style, without the exaggerated histrionics of many silent-movie actors. Most of Psilander's early roles were villains (a clue, perhaps, that he played Wotton?), but when the public demanded to see him in heroic guise, he soon became the most popular leading man in Danish films. He made several of the erotic melodramas then fashionable in Denmark, and also won fame in Russia,

under a stage name, "Mr. Harrison" or "Mr. Garrison" (depending on who transliterates the Russian Cyrillic alphabet). Audiences loved the fair-haired, dashing handsome actor, whose ancestry was Swedish and Greek. Unfortunately, Psilander loved "the little ugly ones"—his nickname for champagne bottles—and frittered away most of his considerable income. He did his best work for Nordisk Films, the most important Danish studio of the period, but after a salary dispute, he formed his own production company in 1917. He never finished another movie. Before the year ended, Psilander died of a heart attack (due to a congenital heart disease, probably made worse by the boozing), at age 33.

The Edison Manufacturing Company released the first American film of the Dorian Gray story, *THE PORTRAIT*. It opened in New York on March 18, 1913. The short subject, one reel of 1000 feet, ran approximately 10 minutes. George Lessey directed a loosely-adapted scenario (with Wilde's story disguised enough to avoid trouble over copyright infringement) by Richard Ridgely. (In 1915, Ridgely wrote and directed *THE MAGIC SKIN*, a Kleine-Edison feature movie based on a possible influence on Wilde: Balzac's *The Wild Ass's Skin*.) Marc MacDermott starred as a Parisian decadent artist, Paul LeGrand, in love with an American art student, Jeanette, played by MacDermott's wife, Miriam Nesbitt. Fledgling actor George Lessey made his debut as a director with *THE PORTRAIT*. He acted in more than five dozen movies by 1945, two years before his death, but ended his directing career in 1920.

Marc MacDermott and Miriam Nesbitt both enjoyed major careers in leading roles with Edison. An anonymous reporter for *The Moving Picture World* (November 20, 1915) wrote, "These two favorite and accomplished stars are linked together in the public's affections and memory probably more than any other screen pair." In 1915, Nesbitt became the first woman to direct an Edison film, *A CLOBBE CALL*. She also wrote and starred in it. Her movie career ended in 1917. MacDermott (generally described as a native of England, though he was born in Australia) kept on acting to much acclaim until 1928, the year before he died during surgery. In 1915, he played identical twins of Jekyll and Hyde persuasion in an Edison three-reeler, *THE DEADLY HATE*.

According to an Edison advance advertisement (*MPW*, March 15, 1913), much of *THE PORTRAIT* roughly parallels the Dorian Gray story, but with a happy ending. "A young artist wins honor and wealth by a portrait of himself, but the girl he loves will not marry him, because of his dissipation. As he sleeps before the portrait he sees his face change, showing in gruesome succession the marks of his excesses, and he learns his lesson."

An anonymous Edison writer provided a more detailed (if grammatically adventurous) synopsis for the *MPW*'s regular column of industry summaries of coming attractions and current movies (March 22, 1913). "Not 'as in a looking-glass' but 'as in his own portrait in a dream does Paul LeGrand, the famous artist, see the lines of dissipation come, one by one, after each successive debauch. Youth and health are both his when he reaches the height of an artist's ambition and wins the 'Grand Prize' for his painting. Now, for the new studio overlooking Paris, man servant and all his heart can desire save one, Jeanette, the girl. He gives an afternoon tea at his studio. When the friends have gone, Paul begs Jeanette to marry him. She tells him to wait, saying his days of dissipation are not yet over, and leaves Paul falls asleep looking at the portrait of himself. Dreams carry him through the dissipations to which the girl had hinted, dancing and women, gambling and wine. Each time he returns to his studio he sees added lines in his portrait. After the last dissipation there is such a radical change in the painting that he is unable to stand it longer and in his dream he cuts the portrait into shreds. Jeanette, the girl, returns for her gloves which she

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**LEFT:** In addition to the many stage and screen adaptations of *The Picture Of Dorian Gray*, there have been countless plays and films about the life of Oscar Wilde. Jade Law (who would make a fine Dorian Gray) was perfectly cast as Lord Alfred Douglas in *WILDE* (1998). **CENTER:** Robert Morley had famously portrayed Wilde on stage in the thirties, then (though he was somewhat too old) repeated the part in the film *OSCAR WILDE* (1959). Phyllis Calvert is seen with Morley as Constance Wilde, Oscar's wife.

had forgotten, and arouses him. He then realizes it was only a dream, but the lesson was well taught and he promises to reform."

Despite destroying his double, Paul survives to achieve the happiness that Dorian Gray hoped for in vain—in Sybil Vane, actually. Here, the occult connection between man and portrait exists only in his conscience-stricken imagination. It lacks the power to reach out to harm Paul in the waking world. An anonymous reviewer (*MPW*, March 29 1913) wrote, "Another dream picture, and it gets over about

as well as any of them do. Watching such pictures, one is afraid, every now and then, that he has missed the dream's end, for the action is almost never dreamlike. But the author of this picture, Richard Ridgely, had a good idea that, to us, seems fresh, and he has written a picture with some good Bohemian atmosphere . . . The photography is clear, for the most part, but very poor at times. One of the fade-away scenes is wretched."

A two-reel (2,000 feet, 25 minutes) *THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY* came out in 1913, from the New York Mo-

**LEFT:** The same year the biopic starring Robert Morley appeared, Peter Finch portrayed Wilde in *THE TRIALS OF OSCAR WILDE* (1960). In this scene, Wilde is threatened by the mad Marquess of Queensbury (Lionel Jeffries). **RIGHT:** It's the War of the Bosies! John Neville (who played Lord Alfred Douglas opposite Morley) fights to the fiery death against John Fraser (Lord Alfred opposite Finch) in *A STUDY IN TERROR* (1965), in which Neville was Sherlock Holmes and Fraser was Jack the Ripper. In the same film, Morley guest-starred as Mycroft Holmes!



tion Picture Corp, USA. The company misspelled the title in advertisements for "DORIAN GREY (Oscar Wilde)" in the spring, 1913 issues of *MPW*. Wallace Reid starred as Dorian, Lois Weber as Sybil Vane, and Weber's husband at the time, Phillips Smalley, as Lord Henry Wotton. Smalley also directed, and he probably wrote the scenario. Reginald Barker's New York Motion Picture Company (actually located in Santa Monica), best known for the Keystone comedies, made 116 movies between 1912 and 1917.

The film received high critical praise at the time of its release, but now seems lost. An anonymous reviewer in *The Bioscope* (September, 1913), wrote that without the "sparkling network of epigram and paradox" of Wilde's dialogue, the story is "revealed as a rather unconvincing, if novel, melodrama. However, the cinematographer may be said to have done his work with a great deal of success, and to have made of the novel as good a picture play as was possible in the circumstances. The acting is particularly excellent, some very skillful studies being given of the slightly unreal, *fin de siècle* characters of Wilde's imagination." He called the staging merely "adequate" and objected to a few discrepancies between the action on screen and the intertitles "The picture was not carried upstairs by the footman but by the obliging art dealer, and Dorian drove to the opium den in a hansom, not in a 'taxi.' Picky, picky, picky..."

Wallace Reid, a talented amateur artist who sketched the cast and crew between scenes, achieved his greatest success as an actor despite his preference for directing and cinematography. At the height of his career, he made films at the rate of one every seven weeks—a total of more than 150! According to *CAI PEOPLE* (1942) screenwriter Dewitt Bodeen in "Wallace Reid Was An Idol In The Age Of Innocence With Feet Of Clay" (*Films in Review*, April, 1966), Reid injured his back in a train wreck, en route to a location for *VALLEY OF THE GIANTS* in 1919. To relieve the pain, he began taking morphine in prescription tablet form. Excessive use led to addiction. Worse, he began chasing the morphine with booze. In 1923, as he attempted to kick these habits, withdrawal symptoms left him so weak that influenza killed him at age 31. He would not be the only actor connected to a Dorian Gray film to suffer the ravages of morphine addiction.

Phillips Smalley (an Oxford University graduate) and Lois Weber (a concert pianist) began their careers in 1905, the year they married, with two years at Gaumont in New Jersey. Later, they worked on at least eight movies together. They made *THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY* at the height of their careers. When George Blaisdell interviewed the Smalleys a few months after they finished this movie (*MPW*, January 24, 1914), he reported that, "The secret of their success has been above all teamwork—backed up by a thorough understanding of picture technique and ability intelligently to apply it." From 1912 to 1914, while working as an actress, Lois Weber also wrote scenarios for Rex-Universal at the rate of one per week!

In the spring of 1914, the Smalleys left Rex-Universal to join Bosworth-Paramount. Weber enjoyed success as both actress and director during the decade after *DORIAN GRAY*. She opened her own studio in 1917 and became known for dramatizing controversial social causes, including birth control. Weber and Smalley had experimented (unsuccessfully) with talkies at Gaumont, but once the talkies came into their own, the careers of both Smalley and Weber faltered. Their divorce probably hurt, too, since, as George Blaisdell noted, they did much of their best work as a team. Weber directed only one movie after 1927, a forgettable 1934 melodrama, *WHITE HEAT*.

*Continued on page 74*

# Casa Video

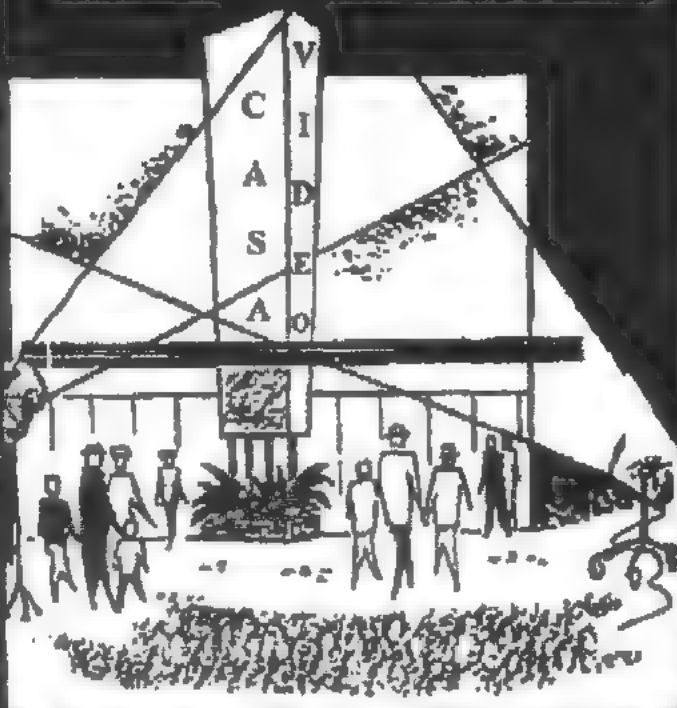
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Hurd  
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interviewed by  
Jim Lysaght



When *Scarlet Street* began putting together material for this years-in-the-making issue devoted to Oscar Wilde's classic 1890 novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, our thoughts naturally turned to the most famous portrayer of Wilde's handsome, eternally youthful character. Hurd Hatfield. The actor, whose waxen good looks had perfectly suited Wilde's Dorian (if not the author's actual physical description of him), had relocated to County Cork in Ireland in the seventies, but frequently returned to the States for visits and acting roles. However, *Scarlet Street* had an ace in the hole right on Hatfield's home turf—Brigid Shinnick, mother of *Scarlet Staffer* Kevin Shinnick, who lived in the village of Fermoy, where Hatfield (a resident of nearby Castle Lyons) used to shop! Mrs. Shinnick's friend and neighbor, Jim Lysaght, set up and conducted the interview for us—bringing his morning catch of fish to Hatfield as a gift, a distinctly Irish touch—and it only awaited the acquisition of further *Dorian Gray* material for publication.

Often mistaken as British, William Rukard Hurd Hatfield was actually born in New York City on December 7, 1917, but trained as an actor in England, with the Dartington Hall Company at the Chekhov Theatre Studio in Devonshire. In addition to *THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY* (1945), Hatfield appeared in such films as *DRAGON SEED* (1944), *DIARY OF A CHAMBERMAID* (1946), *THE UNSUSPECTED* (1947), *TARZAN AND THE SLAVE GIRL* (1950), *THE LEFT HANDED GUN* (1958), *KING OF KINGS* (1961), *HARLOW* (1965), *THE BOSTON STRANGLER* (1968), *THE RED BARON* (1971, directed by Roger Corman), and *CRIMES OF THE HEART* (1986). He frequently appeared on his *DORIAN GRAY* costar Angela Lansbury's *MURDER SHE WROTE*, and also starred on TV in *THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO* (1958), George Bernard Shaw's *DON JUAN IN HELL* (1960), Tennessee Williams' *TEN BLOCKS ON THE CAMINO REAL* (1966), and *THE NORRIS TAPES* (1973, directed by Dan Curtis). On stage, he starred with Rex Harrison and Lili Palmer in *VENUS OBSERVED* (1952, directed by Laurence Olivier) and opposite Geraldine Page in *THE IMMORALIST* (1954). The numerous Shakespearean plays in which he appeared included John Gielgud's *MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING* (1959). In recent years, Hatfield had toured in a one-man show as James McNeill Whistler, *THE SON OF WHISTLER'S MOTHER*.

Hurd Hatfield died on December 29, 1999. He was 82.

**Hurd Hatfield.** I was in University and offered a scholarship to study with Michael Chekhov at Dartington Hall in Devonshire, which was a brilliant cultural center. Chekhov was the youngest member of the Moscow Art Theatre and the nephew of the famous playwright I studied with him at the same age that he

studied with Stanislavski, so I'm the heir—although I've no Russian blood—of this great acting tradition. At the time, I had no idea that I was falling into the hands of an authentic genius. I've worked with so many wonderful directors; I've been very lucky! And my career has been very erratic—which is entirely my fault, because I don't believe the show must go on, I believe that life must go on! So I took care of my parents, I fixed old houses, and I was lucky to continue. I still am working and being employed. I'm a bit too selective; I don't want to live in Hollywood, so I live in Ireland, which I love. Consequently, I burned some of my bridges behind me, but I make new bridges. (Laughs) Anyway, that's the way I became an actor!



Hurd Hatfield

**Scarlet Street:** By being discovered by Michael Chekhov

**HH:** My first professional role was in a very huge flop on Broadway—*THE POSSESSED*, a play by Dostoevski. I also toured under Michael Chekhov's direction—he was the only genius I've ever worked with—in *KING LEAR*, in which I played ancient Gloucester. I was only 20! Before I went to Hollywood, I played in Shakespeare's *Fortinbras* in *HAMLET*, Aguecheek in *TWELFTH NIGHT*. In other words, I was a character actor. *Dorian Gray* was a character part, which nobody ever believes.

**SS:** Is that why you were cast as Dorian, do you think?

**HH:** I was sent to MGM by a friend of mine, Iris Tree, Countess Lederer, who was the daughter of Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree. She knew the director, Albert Lewin. I didn't want to talk about playing *Dorian Gray*, because I thought it was so unsuitable for me. *Dorian* had

blonde hair, blue eyes, and I was quite dark and gloomy. I didn't feel good-looking enough. He was supposed to be the handsomest man in London and I had inhibitions about presenting myself. When I went to audition, I was surrounded by these blonde gods, Adonises, and I felt very inadequate. After three tests, one of them with Angela Lansbury, I was signed. It took three months. I had never mentioned it to my parents in the East, they wondered what I was doing out there! I waited three months because I knew the disappointment would be so keen for them if I didn't get it, and when I did they were absolutely thrilled! My father said, "You have accomplished miracles!" because I was a worthless kid who played the piano and painted and drifted in dreams.

**SS:** It's a Hollywood legend that Greta Garbo wanted to play *Dorian Gray*.

**HH:** It's true! She told me so herself, when I met her at a party in New York. She called me "that cruel young man," partly because of the way I played *Dorian* and partly, simply because I'd played *Dorian*. Garbo suggested to Mayer that she play the role dressed as a boy, but Mayer was frightened enough of making a picture from Oscar Wilde's book.

**SS:** Was *THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY* a good experience for you?

**HH:** It was sort of a miracle to do it, but the film has been a two-edged sword. It's my calling card, it's a classic—which I never dreamed it would become. When they showed the last films that were on franchise in Canada, the Canadian public asked that their favorite MGM film be shown in the last week, and they chose *DORIAN GRAY* above everything. It is amazing! It had a wonderful director and cast—George Sanders and Donna Reed and so forth. It took five months to film. It was meticulously done, but it was a character part; it was not me. People often think that I'm cold, a cold cookie, but I'm not. It was a terrible reach to play the part. I'd never played a gentleman, I'd never stood up straight in the theater! (Laughs) I'm a character actor, really, and I had to learn how to be elegant and handle a cane and all of that.

**SS:** Were you prepared to handle the sudden fame associated with so important a picture?

**HH:** I didn't dream of my name being up in lights and starring in films, and there was, of course, this great occasion of the opening. I thought my father would have a stroke, he got so excited! I can't say it didn't affect me. Dorothy McGuire said to me, "Everyone is changed by success," and it's true. How can you not be changed when suddenly you're a "movie star," and you're surrounded by fans on the street? Bobbie soxers tore the buttons off my clothes! It was all very amusing, but I do prefer the stage. Films are a director's medium, but in the theater the actor has a bit more control and it's more exciting.

**SS:** Speaking of character parts, you played a Chinese in *DRAGON SEED*, alongside such



**LEFT** While waiting to begin *THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY* (1945), Hurd Hatfield (center) made his movie debut in *DRAGON SEED* (1944), in which Hollywood's idea of a Chinese family consisted of Walter Huston (left), Aline MacMahon (right), Turhan Bey, and Katharine Hepburn! **RIGHT**: Hatfield and Audrey Totter were Oliver and Althea Keane in *THE UNSUSPECTED* (1947), directed by a man Hatfield didn't particularly like—Michael Curtiz.

other celebrated "orientals" as Katharine Hepburn, Walter Huston, Aline MacMahon, and Turhan Bey.

**HH:** And a water buffalo! Yes, I had to ride a water buffalo! She was a veteran, she had been in *THE GOOD EARTH*! (Laughs) I had to ride her, but I kept falling off. Water buffalos and the human croch do not fit well together. And then, we had to manage to get into a drainage ditch and roamed the take—and my costume!

**SS:** Because of the time it took to prepare *DORIAN GRAY*, *DRAGON SEED* actually was filmed and released before it.

**HH:** All the Chinese in that film struck me as very odd! Hepburn, with that voice she looked wonderful, but when we spoke it was a nightmare because everybody had a different accent! (Laughs) New York, New England, Russian, Turkish—that film has got held up. There's even someone who does a takeoff on it in a nightclub in New York.

**SS:** Did you enjoy working with Hepburn?

**HH:** She made me very nervous, I didn't enjoy it. I adulated her enormously, but I wasn't used to the star system. I had a lot of very beautiful girls and the one where we did in *DRAGON SEED* was a very beautiful girl. I had to get used to people being stars. Then, the next day she was a flower.

*Dorian Gray*, people brought me a glass of water and left a towel over me. Hollywood is full of false values.

**SS:** It's also difficult to keep your head. It's very difficult to keep your head.

**HH:** Walter Huston played my father, so I was a bit of a disappointment to him.

**SS:** Walter Huston was a wonderful actor, wasn't he?

**HH:** In *THE TREASURE OF THE SIERRA MADRE*, he was marvelous! And he was wonderful in *DOUSWORTH*! Marvelous performance! And it was Mr. Mayer who I went to see. Mary Astor was a star, she was in the rest home. She was wonderful. I didn't know her at all, but she took her flowers and she asked me to take a good-bye. I was then left with her. I was a bit of a disappointment to her.

**SS:** You mentioned that *Dorian Gray* was a bit of a disappointment to you.

**HH:** I never suggested to Mr. Mayer that I should play Dorian Gray. I was a bit of a disappointment to him.

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**LEFT** John Dehner (as Pat Garrett), Hurd Hatfield, and Wally Brown go over their roles in *THE LEFT HANDED GUN* (1958) during preproduction. The film is often cited for its gay subtext, but Hatfield—who played a rancher whose murder sets Billy the Kid (Paul Douglas) on the road to revenge—insists the cast was unaware of any such thing. **RIGHT** John Phillip Law was Baron Manfred Von Richthofen and Hatfield was Anthony Fokker in *THE RED BARON* (1971), directed by Roger Corman. **PAGE 54** Hatfield and Joyce Mackenzie in *DESTINATION MURDER* (1950).



**"Louis B. Mayer came on the set one day. He didn't give me any anxiety at all, whereas when Hepburn came I forgot everything I was doing! Everyone said, 'Hi, Kate!' She was very popular with the crew, and she came right up to me and said, 'I hear you're perfectly wonderful! Are you?'"**

n't care what the book's character looked like, really. MGM was full of these boring, square producers. They weren't artistic. It was a big business and I was sort of horrified by it! But, curiously enough, Albert Lewin was quite an intellectual. He had done an interesting movie, *THE MOON AND SIXPENCE*, about Gauguin, and later a movie with Ava Gardner, *PANDORA AND THE FLYING DUTCHMAN*. He did interesting things. He was determined to do *DORIAN GRAY* and also determined—once I had done a reading for him, which I improvised—to have me do it. And so he went to Louis B. Mayer—who according to Judy Garland was a monster, but he was always nice to me—and he said, "If you don't do it, I will do it independently." Lewin was a very wealthy man. And of all people, Mayer said, "We'll do it here!"

**SS:** Is it the sort of thing you expect from the home of Anna Hardy?

**HH:** Mayer came on the set one day. He didn't give me any anxiety at all, whereas when Hepburn came I forgot everything I was doing! (Laughs) Mayer said there and said, "I'm glad Mr. Hatfield that we're doing a prestige picture again." When Hepburn came on, she interrupted everything. That's part of the movies. In the theater, you'd be arrested if you interrupted somebody! Everyone said, "Hi, Kate!" She was very popular with the crew, and she came right up to me and said, "I hear you're perfectly wonderful! Are you?" (Laughs)

**SS:** That must have been daunting.

**HH:** Well, today I'd say "Yes, and how's your work going?" I'd be more witty, but I was paralyzed by her and didn't know what I was doing! The next scene, she drew every line out of my head! Hedda Hopper came on and everything stopped for her, too. She was a formidable interviewer and columnist, and she wrote the next day, "I met the new actor filming *Dorian Gray*, with the pearl gray voice and the pearl gray vest." I became very friendly with her—well, it was dangerous not to be. (Laughs) I never understood the other one, Louella Parsons. They were the two dragons and you had to be nice to them.

**SS:** Did MGM have any qualms about making a film based on a book by Oscar Wilde, one that strongly hinted at homosexual relations between Dorian and other characters?

**HH:** Well, I think that the homo-sexual implications in Wilde's book were very brilliantly handled, because, you see, there was so much censorship that they couldn't come right out with it. Today they'd risk it. They did another version with a very good actor, Helmut Berger,

and it was a disaster! It didn't stick to the story. They modernized it, and there was a scene with a urinal—it was tasteless and terrible! If *DORIAN GRAY* was done today with all this overdone freedom and no restraint, he'd be jumping in and out of bed with men and women. It would be right up there on the screen, but it would ruin the story! At MGM, I think the fact that they had to hold back to such a degree gave it a great strength. They had to get past the censors, which they very credibly did when the painter says to Dorian, "I hear the most terrible things about you from Lady Windermere," and mentions Lord somebody's son, who committed suicide because of Dorian. They slipped it in, you see.

**SS:** The film doesn't spell it out.

**HH:** If you're very alert, you can get it, the implication is there, but

and simply being associated with such a character as *Dorian Gray* could give rise to gossip.

**HH:** The studio was very careful to keep such matters out of the press. Movie stars learned to be very private. It becomes a lifelong instinct.

**SS:** *Dorian* appears fairly emotionless in the film, because all his emotions are given expression in the painting.

**HH:** That restraint, that understated quality—it was very difficult for me to play it like an expressionist dummy because I'm very lively and I wasn't used to that. But I finally got the style. I contribute that entirely to my Chekhov





**LEFT:** While waiting to begin *THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY* (1945), Hurd Hatfield (center) made his movie debut in *DRAGON SEED* (1944), in which Hollywood's idea of a Chinese family consisted of Walter Huston (left), Aline MacMahon (right), Turhan Bey, and Katharine Hepburn. **RIGHT:** Hatfield and Audrey Totter were Oliver and Althea Keane in *THE UNSUSPECTED* (1947), directed by a man Hatfield didn't particularly like—Michael Curtiz

other celebrated "orientals" as Katharine Hepburn, Walter Huston, Aline MacMahon, and Agnes Moorehead

**HH:** And a water buffalo! Yes, I had to ride a water buffalo! She was a veteran, she had been in *THE GOOD EARTH*! (Laughs) I had to ride her, but I kept talking off. Water buffalos and the human crotch do not fit well together. And then, when I managed to stay on, she went right into a drainage ditch and ruined the take—and my costume!

**SS:** Because of the time it took to prepare *DORIAN GRAY*, *DRAGON SEED* actually was filmed and released before it

**HH:** All the Chinese in that film struck me as very odd! Hepburn, with that voice! She looked wonderful—but when we spoke it was a nightmare, because everybody had a different accent! (Laughs) New York, New England, Russian, Turkish—that film has not held up. There's even someone who does a takeoff on it in a nightclub in New York.

**SS:** Did you enjoy working with Hepburn?

**HH:** She made me very nervous; I didn't enjoy it. I admired her enormously, but I wasn't used to the star system. I had come from a very brilliant teacher and the theater, where we didn't use the word "star;" it was a dirty word. We were an ensemble—we were a company, and I had to get used to people being stars. Then, the moment I became sort of a star with *Dorian Gray*, people brought me a glass of water and fell all over me. Hollywood is full of false values, and you have to keep your head. It's very difficult.

**SS:** It's also difficult to imagine that cast playing Asians!

**HH:** Walter Huston played my father, so Angelica Huston's grandfather was my father! (Laughs) met Angelica once at the Cork Film Festival. When they named the Cork Film Festival building for me, I was very honored.

**SS:** Walter Huston was a wonderful actor, wasn't he?

**HH:** In *THE TREASURE OF THE SIERRA MADRE*, he was marvelous! And he was wonderful in *DODSWORTH*! Marvelous performance! And so was Mary Astor in that. I went to see Mary Astor when she was in the rest home. She was wonderful. I didn't know her at the studio, but I took her flowers and she asked me to kiss her good-bye. I was thrilled! Wonderful actress! And I just made a point of going to see her.

**SS:** You mentioned that *Dorian Gray* measured me but missed. Did MacMahon and I do anything else to make you look more like the book's Dorian?

**HH:** No, they never suggested doing anything with my hair for the role. There were many other actors up for the part. They felt Gregory Peck was too American for it, and Robert Taylor was too old. There were Dorianians who were blonde and taller and better looking than I was, so I nearly left, I nearly walked out of the audition. The Oscar Wilde thing—they did

**LEFT:** John Dehner (as Pat Garrett), Hurd Hatfield, and Wally Brown go over their roles in *THE LEFT HANDED GUN* (1958) during preproduction. The film is often cited for its gay subtext, but Hatfield—who played a rancher whose murder sets Billy the Kid (Paul Newman) on the road to revenge—insists the cast was unaware of any such thing. **RIGHT:** John Phillip Law was Baron Manfred Von Richthofen and Hatfield was Anthony Fokker in *THE RED BARON* (1971), directed by Roger Corman. **PAGE 51:** Hatfield and Joyce Mackenzie in *DESTINATION MURDER* (1950).





**"Louis B. Mayer came on the set one day. He didn't give me any anxiety at all, whereas when Hepburn came I forgot everything I was doing! Everyone said, 'Hi, Kate!' She was very popular with the crew, and she came right up to me and said, 'I hear you're perfectly wonderful! Are you?'"**

n't care what the book's character looked like, really. MGM was full of these boring, square producers. They weren't artistic. It was a big business and I was sort of horrified by it! But, curiously enough, Albert Lewin was quite an intellectual. He had done an interesting movie, *THE MOON AND SIXPENCE*, about Gauguin, and later a movie with Ava Gardner, *PANDORA AND THE FLYING DUTCHMAN*. He did interesting things. He was determined to do *DORIAN GRAY* and also determined—once I had done a reading for him, which I improvised—to have me do it. And so he went to Louis B. Mayer—who according to Judy Garland was a monster, but he was always nice to me—and he said, "If you don't do it, I will do it independently!" Lewin was a very wealthy man. And of all people, Mayer said, "We'll do it here!"

**SS:** Not the sort of thing you expect from the home of *Andy Hardy*!

**HH:** Mayer came on the set one day. He didn't give me any anxiety at all, whereas when Hepburn came I forgot everything I was doing! (Laughs) Mayer sat there and said, "I'm glad, Mr. Hatfield that we're doing a prestige picture again." When Hepburn came on, she interrupted everything. That's part of the movies; in the theater, you'd be arrested if you interrupted somebody! Everyone said, "Hi, Kate." She was very popular with the crew, and she came right up to me and said, "I hear you're perfectly wonderful! Are you?" (Laughs)

**SS:** That must have been daunting!

**HH:** Well, today I'd say, "Yes, and how's your work going?" I'd be more witty, but I was paralyzed by her and didn't know what I was doing in the next scene; she drew every line out of my head! Hedda Hopper came on and everything stopped for her, too! She was a formidable interviewer and columnist, and she wrote the next day, "I met the new actor filming *Dorian Gray*, with the pearl gray voice and the pearl gray vest." I became very friendly with her—well, it was dangerous not to be! (Laughs) I never understood the other one, Louella Parsons. They were the two dragons and you had to be nice to them.

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and it was a disaster! It didn't stick to the story. They modernized it, and there was a scene with a urinal—it was tasteless and terrible! If *DORIAN GRAY* was done today with all this overdone freedom and no restraint, he'd be jumping in and out of bed with men and women. It would be right up there on the screen, but it would ruin the story! At MGM, I think the fact that they had to hold back to such a degree gave it a great strength. They had to get past the censors, which they very credibly did when the painter says to *Dorian*, "I hear the most terrible things about you from Lady Windermere," and mentions Lord somebody's son, who committed suicide because of *Dorian*. They shipped it in, you see.

**SS:** The film doesn't spell it out.

**HH:** If you're very alert you can get it, the implication is there, but everything happens offstage. Being explicit would have ruined it! And why has it held up, decades later? Because it had that great restraint. Today is so overboard with sexuality, with violence—I think there are wonderful films being made, yes, but they've lost a lot of artistry by being so very explicit.

**SS:** It's different, too, in that many stars aren't so wary about playing gay or bisexual characters. In earlier days, it could destroy an actor's career if his sexuality was revealed,

and simply being associated with such a character as *Dorian Gray* could give rise to gossip.

**HH:** The studio was very careful to keep such matters out of the press. Movie stars learned to be very private. It becomes a lifelong instinct.

**SS:** *Dorian* appears fairly emotionless in the film, because all his emotions are given expression in the painting.

**HH:** That restraint, that understated quality—it was very difficult for me to play it like an expressionist dummy, because I'm very lively and I wasn't used to that. But I finally got the style. I contribute that entirely to my Chekhov



training, which helps you to grasp the style of something foreign to yourself. That alone got me through it, but it was quite difficult. The film was very restrained and suggestive.

**SS:** You mentioned your friendship with Angela Lansbury, who played Sybil Vane.

**HH:** This was Angela's second film; we tested together and we're still friends. She's a wonderful actress, and she always had her feet on the ground. I never did, I had to work for stability! (Laughs) When we became friends, I had done one film, *DRAGON SEED* with Hepburn, and she had done *GASLIGHT* with Charles Boyer. She was nominated for the Academy Award for both that film and mine. I was overlooked. I didn't know anything about taking an advertisement to promote yourself. It was a bit of a political thing, then, though the votes were absolutely honest and square. The film was nominated, I believe, in four categories. I was sent a limousine that evening—it was my first Academy Awards—and I saw myself up there on the screen, because they couldn't show a scene for the photography nomination without showing me.

**SS:** George Sanders was top-billed in *DORIAN GRAY* as Lord Henry Wotton.

**HH:** Sanders was famous for being cynical and unpleasant, but he was charming to me, absolutely charming! No outrageous behavior, except during a costume fitting before the film started. It was getting after six o'clock, and Sanders was very restless. He said, "This may be amusing for Lewin, but I would like to go to my dinner!" But he was lovely. He never stepped on my toes, because he saw I was in a difficult position; I was a theater actor and had only done one film. In *DRAGON SEED*, when they'd ask me if I was on my marks, I was too nervous to ask them what the marks were! I never knew where anything was! I ruined a whole shot, once, because my eyepiece fell off and I didn't match shots. Nobody told me anything in *DRAGON SEED*!

**SS:** George Sanders appears in several of Albert Lewin's films.

**HH:** Oh, I think Lewin idolized Sanders in that Lewin was a small man—quite small—and Sanders was tall and attractive. Of course, I had to look attractive, too, so Lewin refused to photograph me after four o'clock, so I wouldn't look tired. Dorian Gray can't look tired. The painting can look tired! (Laughs)

**SS:** The costumes in *DORIAN GRAY* are beautifully designed.

**HH:** I had 79 hours of costume fitting! It was terrible, I didn't like to go. I can't sit still at a tailor, but luckily I can wear clothes off the rack. I just had a tailor make me a copy of a costume from *DORIAN GRAY*, for my performance as Whistler. I have the original designs upstairs in the closet.

**SS:** In addition to the costumes, the set decoration is so fine, filled with art objects that are used to symbolically comment on the story.

**HH:** Yes, well, Gordon Wiles was always right there with Lewin. He was Lewin's personal assistant and never left his side. In matters of taste and set decoration, they worked it out together. You'll notice the building blocks on the floor where the painting is stored, that they have the initials of Dorian's victims. They change constantly! The Egyptian cat statue used in the film is still with me, right here in my house.

**SS:** Donna Reed and Peter Lawford played characters who aren't in Wilde's novel.

**HH:** Donna Reed was a farmer's daughter, I believe, in the Middle West and an absolutely lovely person. She sadly died, very bravely, of cancer and I went to her



THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY

funeral. I met her second husband and family, and they were just lovely. They said she had spoken of me so warmly. I'm inclined, living in Ireland, to lose touch with people and I regret that. Peter Lawford was a lightweight. He was full of charm and all of that, and a biography of him said that he could have played Dorian Gray—which he couldn't have in a hundred years! (Laughs) He didn't have otherworldly qualities, either; I had to manufacture them. Lawford was a bit of a playboy, and he just went to hell with drink and drugs. Gracefully, because he was charming. And not a serious actor.

**SS:** What was your immediate impression when you first saw *THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY*?

**HH:** I loved the movie and hated myself! (Laughs) Actually, the first time saw it I

snuck into a sneak preview. I disguised myself with a false mustache and old clothes, because Mayer didn't want the actors to attend, and then I wound up sitting right behind him in the balcony—as if I wasn't already nervous enough! I hated my performance! Hated it! I'd never seen myself in so large a part—you don't see yourself when you're on the stage—and I loathed myself!

**SS:** It's a shame that Albert Lewin never used you in another film—not that he made terribly many.

**HH:** Lewin was a wonderful man, a collector of art and quite intellectual, and he was in with all those thugs and heavyweights at the studio. He was a fish out of water in that place, and so was I. He never could find anything else for me, and then they finally let me leave because I couldn't make a film career off *DORIAN GRAY*, it was too special. Lewin had a great respect for Wilde's work; he even invented some of the Wildean witticisms for the film. He did direct his actors perhaps a bit too much. He was not an actor's director in the sense of Nicholas Ray or Elia Kazan, but he was very meticulous what he did. He had great taste and he knew the classics. One director I didn't care for—Michael Curtiz. He was very nice to me, but I just felt there was something phony about that Hungarian accent. He would stumble over what he said, which made for jokes and so forth. Good publicity, but phony.

**SS:** Michael Curtiz directed you in *THE UNSUSPECTED*, which starred Claude Rains.

**HH:** I loved working with Claude Rains, and also with Constance Bennett. Constance Bennett, always immaculately dressed! (Laughs) Years later, I worked with her niece in a play. Constance was very cool and it was always fun to catch up with her.

**SS:** In *THE UNSUSPECTED*, you were Audrey Totter's drunken husband.

**HH:** It was a stupid part. I was beginning to slip out there in Hollywood. Besides, I wanted to get back to the theater. But it was lovely to work with those actors—I never thought I'd work with Constance Bennett and Claude Rains, or some of the stars in other films. I did *HARLOW*, a terrible movie with Ginger Rogers. It was great fun to make, but it's a big turkey. We were doing a wedding scene, and the director said to improvise. I started laughing, and Ginger said, "What are you laughing at?" I didn't dare tell her. I was laughing because I was in such a turkey with Ginger Rogers! (Laughs)

**SS:** So the movie roles were hard to get?

**HH:** Movies, yes. I've done much too much television, but Bruce Beresford put me back into films in some interesting roles, in *CRIMES OF THE HEART* and *HER ALIBI*. He's a most gifted, unpretentious man. In Hollywood I knew

Continued on page 76

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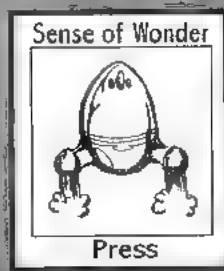
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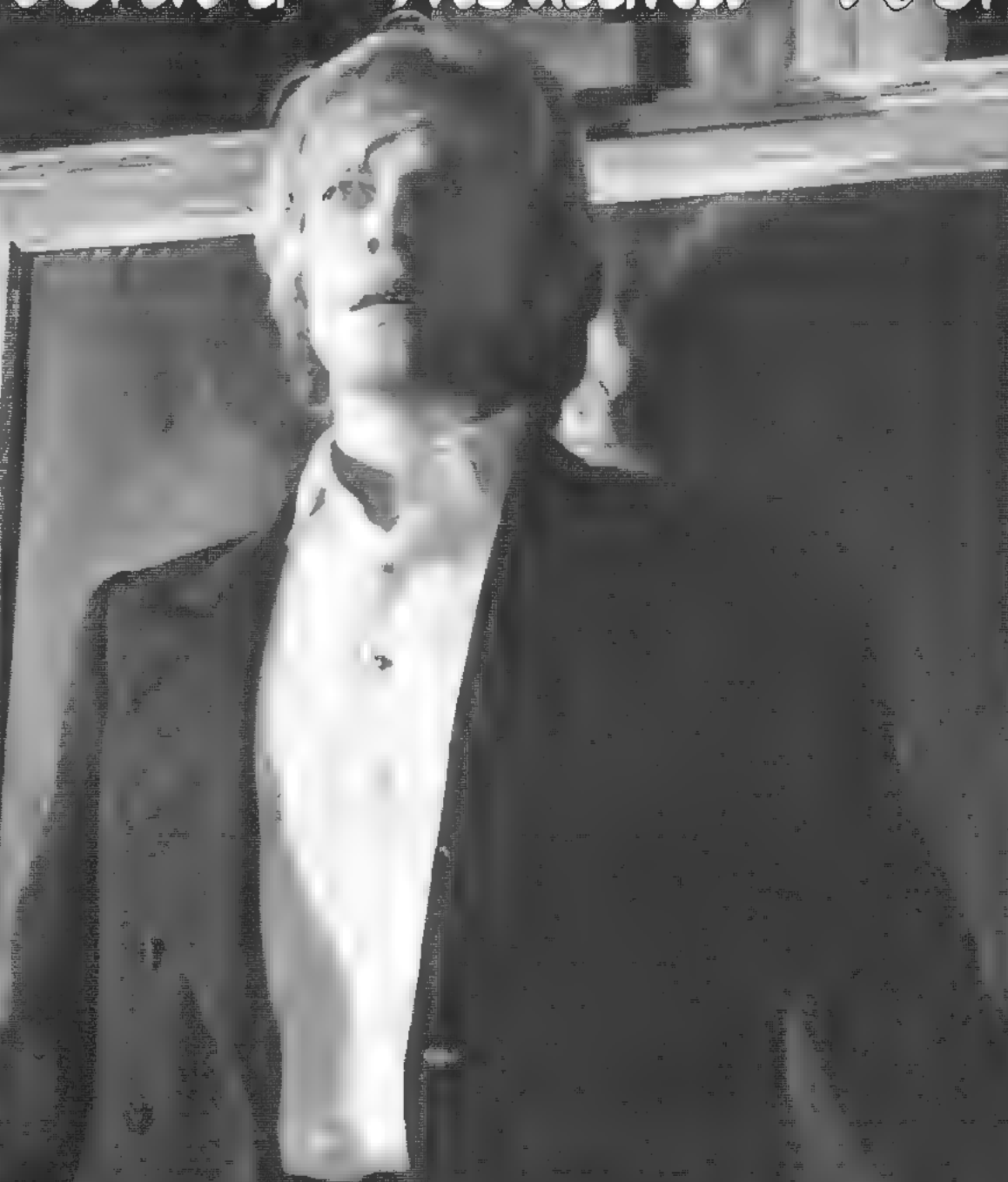
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Worth a Thousand Words



Helmut Berger

interviewed by David Del Valle

This interview was conducted originally on behalf of the legendary *Films and Filming* magazine, for which I was the L.A. correspondent in 1984. Its very existence is a story in itself, as my meeting with Helmut Berger had been postponed countless times. Quite unexpectedly, Berger invited me to his West Hollywood apartment on Larrabee Avenue in the heart of the gay ghetto known as Boys' Town.

Berger informed me that he had genuinely wished to do the interview, but if one knew "Muti" (short, informal German for Helmut) as his friends called him, one knew he could rarely keep appointments on time and indulged in excesses far too much for his own good.

The Swiss-born actor had been given a recurring role on ABC's *DYNASTY*, but he thought little of it. He found it humorous that the program was called *DENVER* in Germany. Berger also had no concept or idea of TV's importance to one's career, both in the United States and abroad.

Great physical beauty had been Berger's passport into show business, though, like Oscar Wilde's *Dorian Gray*, it spoiled him. Luchino Visconti bestowed cinematic immortality on the blonde god in his productions of *THE DAMNED* (1969) and *LUDWIG* (1972), and then exposed Berger in his last film, *CONVERSATION PIECE* (1974), in a role based on the actor. Berger's life and career would never be the same after Visconti's death.

When we finally met face to face, our evening was filled with laughter, warmth, and much *gemutlichkeit*. Berger knew how to turn on the charm. Within minutes, we were drinking wine and listening to the latest Rolling Stones single, "Under cover of the Night." Berger was especially intrigued by the lyric "All the young men . . . they've been rounded up," which he played over and over.

By evening's end, I was unquestionably the planet's biggest Helmut Berger fan. Reflecting on that 17-years-past meeting, now, I can easily muse over how the excesses and personal demons affected Berger's life and work in later years.

Most of his friends and colleagues consider Helmut Berger a hard living but lovable character who might also have been a great actor had he not chosen to put his energy into his life instead of his craft. Of all the actors who have portrayed *Dorian Gray*, Helmut Berger comes closest to living that role in real life . . .

**Scarlet Street:** Was acting something you always wanted to do?

**Helmut Berger:** Yes, I always wanted to do, and I wanted to go to the drama school, to Vienna—the Max Reiner seminar, but my father was against it. My mother was pro, but my father was against because he wanted me to go on with our family business. That's a chain

of hotels in Austria. So when I finished college, I was 18, I packed my suitcase and I left!

**SS:** And you went from Austria . . .

**HB:** To Switzerland. Then I went to Paris, then to London. I worked in Guernsey and in Jersey, and then to London and there I tried to get into this group. Young Polanski, young Rambling, young Ventura, young Duke Bailey—this period of Swinging London.

**SS:** The sixties!

**HB:** The sixties, yes!

**SS:** What do you recall about the very first job you ever had as an actor?

**HB:** I did a commercial—so it was already acting for me! (Laughs) It was for sherry, for English TV. And then through my actor friends, I made an audition for a

Rome. And there I made a movie test, because Visconti was preparing *DER JUNGHE TORLESS*.

**SS:** *YOUNG TORLESS*.

**HB:** It is a movie by Robert Musil, and it was directed by Volker Schlöndorff. Visconti wanted to do it and he was late to buy the rights. So I did a test for that, for that role. Well, it didn't work out, and then he offered me a part because he directed a sketch in *LE STREGHE*. It was called *THE WITCHES*.

**SS:** That was a multipart film with a different director for each sequence—Vittorio De Sica, Pier Paolo Pasolini, Franco Rossi, Mauro Bolognini, and Visconti. You played a butler.

**HB:** Yes, that's right! And this was my first film. From there I got the lead role in *THE DAMNED*, and then I did this terrible, terrible film—*DORIAN GRAY*—in England.

**SS:** Have you ever seen the MGM version of *THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY* with Hurd Hatfield?

**HB:** Oh, no, I never could see my movies!

**SS:** No, the film with Hurd Hatfield?

**HB:** Oh, yes, yes! The original film I have seen.

**SS:** Greta Garbo wanted to play *Dorian Gray*, but MGM wasn't brave enough to cast a woman in the role.

**HB:** I met Garbo once, in the street. Luchino recognized her in front of Bloomingdale's. Luchino spoke with her, she was running! (Laughs) She was very impressed by Luchino, though, because Luchino wanted to use her in *PROST* and she said yes! She was supposed to play the Queen of Naples.

**SS:** And you would have played Marcel!

**HB:** No, Morel. And Luchino wanted to go back to Brando to play the Baron de Charles. It didn't work out.

**SS:** What were the circumstances behind the making of *DORIAN GRAY*?

**HB:** After the success worldwide of *THE DAMNED*, I was showered with scripts. Visconti hated all, most particularly *DORIAN GRAY*. However, being rebellious and tired of being told what was right or wrong for my career, I seized the moment to travel and be on my own without Luchino's criticism constantly. I had never been to England. And I was the star of *DORIAN GRAY* and my contract was very appealing as I recall, lots of first class dolce vita.

**SS:** Did you work well with the director, Massimo Dallamano?

**HB:** He, Massimo, was very charming and quite mad. He had seen me in *THE DAMNED*, of course, and said I was the only actor who could do justice to *Dorian Gray*, especially in showing his bisexuality and perversity. Massimo was convinced that the only way to make Oscar Wilde's vision was to update it to current times free of censorship.

**SS:** Herbert Lom played Lord Henry Wotton, the man who corrupts Dorian.

**HB:** Herbert was great—lots of fun, a wicked sense of humor. He knew immediately what we are doing is trash but he, being a man of the theater, respected Os-



Handsome Helmut Berger first made a splash in Luchino Visconti's *THE DAMNED* (1969), as a young Nazi officer whose kinky quirks include getting all dolled up like Marlene Dietrich in *THE BLUE ANGEL* (1930).

drama school, and of course I missed that. So I go to the teachers from the same drama school and I had private lessons, because I still had a problem with my English.

**SS:** Private lessons?

**HB:** I had all the teachers' private lessons, and from there I went to Italy to Perugia, the university for foreigners to study Italian. There was a big union problem to work in England, and I had to have my card, and with my German accent I can't do Shakespeare in England! I didn't want to go back to Germany or Austria, so I said, "Well, let's go to Italy" because I spoke quite well Italian already. So I went to Perugia and from there I went to



**LEFT:** The family that goes mad together is glad together. The soon-to-be bonkers King Ludwig (Helmut Berger) comforts his already crazed kid brother, Otto (Hammer veteran John Moulder-Brown), in Luchoni Visconti's *LUDWIG* (1972). **RIGHT:** What's a troubled, child molesting, cross-dressing Nazi (Berger) to do but turn to his mother (Ingrid Thulin) when he's feeling like one of *THE DAMNED*.

car Wilde. In the scene in the shower on the yacht, it was Herbert who makes sure our seduction is subtle and off-camera. Massimo always wanted to go beyond what is necessary. He wanted an exploitation film that looked like an art film.

**SS:** *The Italian version is titled IL DIO CHI AMATO DORIAN, or THE GOD CALLED DORIAN. Did the script differ from the version released by AIP in the United States?*

**HB:** Possibly, yes. I think so. There was more sex and more reference to his homosexual activities than in America.

**SS:** *Dallamano called his film "a modern allegory inspired by Oscar Wilde," yet he took great liberties in having Dorian cruise a black sailor in a men's room.*

**HB:** (Laughs) I told you he was wild! He wanted to make epic of perversion, but he was no Tinto Brass. All the sex is more camp than shocking. Personally I think Massimo wanted to be Dorian Gray in real life.

**SS:** *DORIAN GRAY contains many notorious scenes, but none more notorious than the one in which Dorian sodomizes Mrs. Ruxton,*

*played by Isa Miranda, while she stands in a stable and talks over the gate to her groom.*

**HB:** That would be one of our most tasteless moments. It should have been a boy, but it was just as perverse doing it to Isa, because it showed Dorian's talent for having sex with just about anybody if it suited his purpose.

**SS:** *The film is a time capsule of seventies pop and Swinging London, isn't it?*

**HB:** All I really remember is the great time it is to be in London and how much fun to make that film. Honestly, Mas-

**LEFT:** The perverse *SALON KITTY* (1976) contained too much nudity even for the frequently undraped Berger (see 1970's *DORIAN GRAY* on the next page), who demanded that some of the sex scenes be toned down. Berger wasn't too affronted to go fully frontal, however. **RIGHT:** Berger lent one of his patented gigolo performances to *ASH WEDNESDAY* (1973), with Elizabeth Taylor as the lucky older woman.





simo, the director, would have had all the decadence he wanted if he had just followed me around the city at night with his camera. I had a ball! Great fun, great locations—bad, bad movie! (Laughs)

**SS:** Did Visconti guide you in interpreting your role in *THE DAMNED*? You relied on him, didn't you?

**HB:** After the tests I made for *TORLESS*, he said I should go back to London and study more. Acting and movement and speech, and how to analyze a play, and mimic and all that. For *THE DAMNED*, well, I had a coach. I studied in English the script and in German. It was filmed in English, but certain scenes, certain dramatic scenes, Visconti preferred I do it in my language. He felt that I was stronger in my own language with dramatic scenes. So big, big scenes I had in *THE DAMNED*, I did in German. Then I looped into English.

**SS:** Did you realize that playing Martin in *THE DAMNED* would make you an international star?

**HB:** Yes, of course, because I knew Visconti! And also, I think, he wrote the part with me in mind. Which helps a lot! We had fantastic preparation; we had two months of preparation on that. Original cast was Ingrid Bergman instead of Ingrid Thulin, and she refused it because of the incest scene. Next to Ingrid Bergman, he wanted Richard Widmark. For him, Ingrid Thulin was too strong, so he didn't want a strong man next to her, so he got Richard Widmark and chose Dirk Bogarde, who is strong in his head, but not physically. Different acting, a different way of acting. He looked for the balance. Equilibrium!

**SS:** Was the American release print of *THE DAMNED* censored in any way?

**HB:** I've never seen the American version. Thanks to Joe Hyams, of Warner Bros., there was the American release. Joe Hyams, he was the head of the Public Relations at Warners, so he had quite an influence on Warners. He pushed the people to buy it. At the time they were very scared about the incest scene and about the child molesting scene. So Joe Hyams really helped to get Warner Bros. to buy the movie. And then I got the nomination for The Golden Globe and I had to tour with the movie. I went everywhere—to New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, Philadelphia, Miami, the film festival in Argentina, Buenos Aires, Rio de Janeiro, back to Paris, to Munich, to Vienna, to Rome.

**SS:** How wonderful!

**HB:** (Laughs) It was very tiring, but it was wonderful!

**SS:** What kind of offers did you get immediately after *THE DAMNED*?

**HB:** Immediately, of course, from the Americans I got Nazi roles! I was typecast in roles which I refused. I refused several. I was offered one with Faye Dunaway—*VOYAGE OF THE DAMNED*. I wanted to play the Malcolm McDowell role, but he already was signed. And I had to play a nasty one again, so I didn't want to do it and Helmut Griem played it.

**SS:** There was a climate in the early seventies, starting with *THE DAMNED* and including



**"I lost some movies after the death of Visconti. I had a big problem, my own problem, and I couldn't work for three years. I was on drugs and alcohol, I didn't get up any more, I didn't like my work any more! I had a big breakdown. I wasn't prepared to fight against those intrigues of the business, because I had always Luchino who solved the problems and the jealousies, and told me who I have to see and who I shouldn't see; who is dangerous and who is not dangerous."**

such films as *DORIAN GRAY* and *CABARET*, that sparked an interest in decadence. Your audience expected you to play perverse and narcissistic characters.

**HB:** Yes, decadent and spoiled!

**SS:** Willful, wealthy, and able to do what you want *when* you want—which is a European custom, isn't it?

**HB:** Very! (Laughs)

**SS:** What was Visconti's own reaction to the critical success of *THE DAMNED*?

**HB:** Oh, he was very pleased, I think, that I took off. Be-

cause he made another actor successful like he did with Alain Delon. It was always his way, he always wanted to launch people. He was very, very happy with that.

**SS:** Your next film was *THE GARDEN OF THE FINZI-CONTINIS*, directed by Vittorio De Sica.

**HB:** He had a different working system, because De Sica is a great actor. So he would

act the whole scene, and then he would say "Now we'll do it your way." I really

got scared because I could never do it as well but he'd say, "No, no, you did it well." He was less directing, he let you work

it out yourself. Visconti was exact—he wants the right hand, but not the left.

**SS:** Did you enjoy working with Dominique Sanda?

**HB:** Well, this was her first film and it was very funny, because I met her on the airport in Paris—she went to Rome for the test—so I met her and she was a monster! (Laughs)

Visconti spoke with her on the plane and found her very interesting and very beautiful. When we arrived in Rome, Luchino, being a great friend of De Sica, called him up and said, "Listen, I saw this girl and if you don't take her I'm going to use her for my next film!" So, she had a help. It was a first important film for her. So it was for Fabio Testi and so it was for me, because it was a different style. It won the Oscar for Best Foreign Film.

**SS:** Did De Sica advise you in your career and suggest what film you should do next?

**HB:** No, no—who gave me some advice was Visconti, when he always read the scripts, because I really never knew.

**SS:** Visconti advised you even on the films he didn't direct?

**HB:** Yes, yes! I always wanted Luchino's opinion, but, of course, he found everything shit! (Laughs)

**SS:** But didn't he like the script for *THE GARDEN OF THE FINZI-CONTINIS*?

**HB:** Yes, of course he said, "You *must* do it!" Although it's not a leading role, but it was a really good role, very important to me. They always say, no small parts, only small actors! From *FINZI-CONTINIS*, I did *ASH WEDNESDAY*.

**SS:** With Elizabeth Taylor!

**HB:** Well, it was fun because she likes alcohol and I like alcohol, so after working hours every night we go to the clubs. Working with her, she had a big drama with Burton at the time. And Burton was there and he didn't work in the movie, so it was very difficult for her, I think. But we had great fun!

**SS:** Did you meet Henry Fonda?

**HB:** Yes, of course I did! He was divine! Very relaxed, very polite—well, he treated me always like I would be his son.

**SS:** You had one of your best roles in Visconti's *LUDWIG*.

**HB:** Well, I wanted to do a big, big film with costumes, on a character which was very important in Germany. For me, Ludwig, the King of Bavaria, is cool. We wanted to do something big, and the thought came around slowly when we saw the Tchaikovsky film, *THE MUSIC I OVERS*. I said I wanted to do something like that. And Luchino said, "Okay, let's try it!" Luchino researched these books, and they did the makeup and we got it together. I really wanted to make something big—a Visconti epic! And so we started...

**SS:** Did you do any personal research?

**HB:** Oh, yes! I went to Bavaria; I lived there for five months and I did big research, because there were still some Bavarians alive who knew him. So we spoke with them, especially about his death because people say he was shot and there are others who say otherwise.

**SS:** Do you believe he was murdered?

**HB:** I believe he was murdered, yes! The family keeps the cloth he was wearing. No one has seen it yet. The family keeps it and they say it has a hole in it, when they brought him out of the lake.

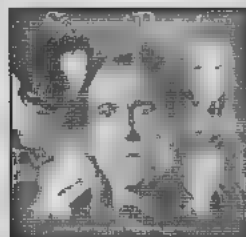
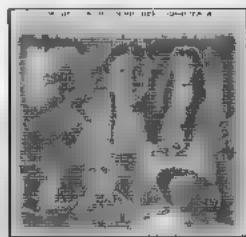
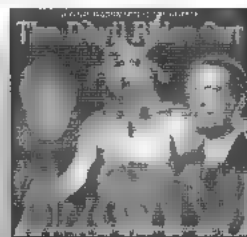
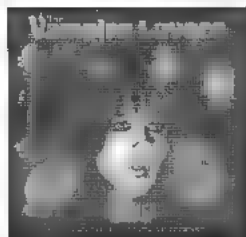
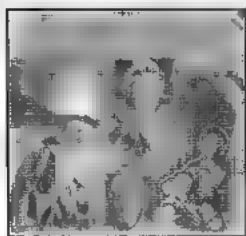
**SS:** His doctor was killed, too.

**HB:** Yes, so it was a political act. We learned so much, visiting his castle and the whole cult in Bavaria about this King. In fact, they call him "The Dream King."

**SS:** Yes, that's right. Did you enjoy working with Romy Schneider?

**HB:** Well, I adored her, adored her always! I liked her craziness, I liked her—she was like my sister, she came from Salzburg, she was Austrian! She had a Viennese father and Viennese mother, but she was brought up in Salzburg.

**SS:** How did both Visconti and you feel after *LUDWIG* was taken away and shown in a severely cut form?



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The ambiguous relationship between Dorian Gray and Lord Henry Wotton (Helmut Berger and Herbert Lom) was made explicitly homosexual in Massimo Dallamano's modern retelling of Oscar Wilde's chilling story, with the twosome sharing steamrooms and showers together.

**HB:** Well, while Luchino was cutting the montage in the cutting room, he felt sick, he got sick. He couldn't work and he had to finish it, because it had to come out! So Franco Zefferelli helped him. He was very sick, so Zefferelli did it. And when Luchino saw it he was very, very unhappy! Then Zefferelli says, "Because you feel badly, we'll recut it." And then never did so! Well, Luchino sued the Germans and he sued, I think, the Americans, and he won the case. But he was very unhappy with the film. I thought with LUDWIG I would go back to America and maybe I get a nomination again, but with the result that was so bad, the Americans d.d.n't understand the character!

**SS:** That's really too bad. One last question about LUDWIG—what do you recall about John Moulder-Brown, who played your brother, Prince Otto?

**HB:** Oh, he was delightful and great to act with, and to party with after the day's filming. Since he was playing my brother, it was fortunate that we had between us a certain rapport.

**SS:** Tell us about CONVERSATION PIECE, which was almost Visconti's last film.

**HB:** He directed from a wheelchair. It was very difficult! And I think he wrote the script a little bit on his life. That's why he used also Burt Lancaster; he was a big admirer of Burt Lancaster's work. He was one of the finest movie actors. He always treated me, always, as if I would be their kid—which was nice.

**SS:** Fatherly.

**HB:** Yes, "Do this, Helmut," and "Do that, Helmut," and giving advice. I didn't like the film. I didn't like the character. I did n't like it how Luchino saw me, because the character did some things which are close to my own character.

**SS:** But you did it anyway?

**HB:** I had to do it! I wanted to do it!

**SS:** The death scene at the end of CONVERSATION PIECE: is that how Visconti pic-

tured the end for himself? Surrounded by beautiful things, but feeling out of place...

**HB:** Yes, yes—but understanding the young people. He understands them, but not really the pop scene and the sexual freedom.

**SS:** It's difficult to discuss Helmut Berger and not continually return to Visconti and his influence over you. Since his death in 1976, do you feel like a part of your life has ended?

**HB:** Absolutely, absolutely! Great, important directors were all scared to work with me, because they called me a Viscontian actor. They couldn't handle me.

**SS:** Not the way Visconti handled you. You had a reputation for being temperamental and spoiled, didn't you?

**HB:** Yeah, I was spoiled by—how you say? his perfectionism. Spoiled by how he treats the actors and spoiled how he works. Joseph Losey wanted me, but being a big admirer of Visconti and wanting to be Visconti, he was scared. They were all scared of Visconti, saying, "My God! He worked with Visconti! You don't give him what he wants and he's going to make problems!"

**SS:** You made THE ROMANTIC ENGLISH WOMAN for Joseph Losey, while Visconti was still alive.

**HB:** Which has the character a little bit like the one in CONVERSATION PIECE. Joseph Losey was a different style. Luchino read the script and he said, "Of course, do it!" I knew that he didn't like Joseph Losey very much. He liked his work, but he didn't like him because always Joseph Losey did what Luchino wanted to do. He hated the idea that Joseph Losey wanted to do Proust.

**SS:** REMEMBRANCE OF DAYS PAST.

**HB:** He was involved with his project, yes. Then he wanted to do THE MAGIC MOUNTAIN, which was Luchino's project. So there was always this fight, this rivalry between the two about the subjects. But he said, "Go! Go and do the Jo-

seph Losey movie!" He never believed I'm gonna do it! When he started to work again, he prepared L'INNOCENTE with Giancarlo Giannini and Laura Antonelli, and he wanted me to do it. And he was really furious at Joseph Losey, and he said, "Okay, you have no time, now, but after this date you're finished with Losey so you can do it!" He started to be really nasty to me!

**SS:** He was jealous, really.

**HB:** Yes, yes—he never forgave me that I d.d this.

**SS:** Did you like Joseph Losey?

**HB:** Well, I came with agent and we met him at his house. I liked his work. I thought he was English; I didn't know he was American. He was very at his distance with me, but I was fascinated. I'm always very shy when I meet people the first time, especially when I have to perform an audition. It's terrible, an audition—it depends how you look and how you talk and how you behave, maybe you get the part or not!

**SS:** Had the film already been cast with Michael Caine and Glenda Jackson?

**HB:** Yes, it was. It was just after Glenda's second Oscar, so she was a big star. And Michael Caine was already Michael Caine! (Laughs) For me, it was difficult to work with Glenda in England. When we shot outside of England, in Baden-Baden and in Monte Carlo, it was easier, because she was out of her element. On the contrary was Michael, he was very easy going, he was nice.

**SS:** What do you remember about the elevator scene, in which Glenda has sex with you?

**HB:** Wow! (Laughs) We just went into it! I couldn't do anything, she just d.d it! She made it a scene! She just took me and said, "Here we go!"

**SS:** When you're making a film, do you go to the dailies?

**HB:** Never! No! I hate them, because I get influenced. The first time I saw THE RO-

MANTIC ENGLISHWOMAN was in Cannes, for the film festival. It was out of competition. And, well, I never like myself, so I waited for the reviews and they were very good. So I was happy. So I thought I was understood.

SS: After *THE ROMANTIC ENGLISH WOMAN*, you made *SALON KITTY*.

HB: I liked Tinto Brass's first movies. I liked his intellect. And then he sent me this script and I said, "God, what we gonna do with this?" (Laughs) It was like a porno movie! I said, "What we gonna do with this porno film—so many naked scenes it's terrible!" But I wanted to work with Tinto Brass. And so we worked on the script and reinvented the whole character, because I was always naked! I became a whole different character, got rid of all those naked scenes. I did it my way and I tried to work with him. Then he wanted me for *CALIGULA* and I said, "Listen, this is too much! I can't read for this!" With *SALON KITTY*, he became really famous internationally, because his first movies were good movies, but not known. With *SALON KITTY*, he made money, a lot of money, and from there he got all the production together for *CALIGULA*.

SS: Do you think the film was successful because a lot of people expected another performance like Martin in *THE DAMNED*?

HB: I think they wanted the same perversity. In fact with this film, I have stopped making a Nazi. At the end of *SALON KITTY*, when they shoot me and I die, I said, "Okay with this! This is the end of my Nazi!" I never did another SS or Nazi.

SS: Yes, but didn't you play a Nazi years later, in *OUTRAGEOUS*?

HB: Yes, but in prison. I have no power because I'm a prisoner of the partisans.

SS: Have you ever done any stage work?

HB: No. I wanted to, but then I have to go to back to Germany and I don't want to do that. To work there for movies is only three months, but if I make a stage work then I would have to go back at least for two years if I want to do something serious.

SS: In 1979, you made *FANTOMAS*, a four-episode miniseries featuring the famous French master criminal.

HB: But I didn't play the character when he wore the mask. They just used some blue eyes. I just did the scenes where *Fantomas* is playing someone else. It was shown early in the afternoon, was made for children.

SS: American TV viewers probably know you best for your role as Peter De Vilbis in *DYNASTY*. How did that come about?

HB: They wanted a European. Just to give a kick to the whole show, I think. And my agent was contacted by the producers, then I made a test on the telephone for my accent to see if my English is good enough or not.

SS: *DYNASTY* is your first experience with American television, wasn't it?

HB: A soap opera, yes. I did *THE RAID ON ENTEBBE*, but this was shot like a feature film, because in Europe it came out as a feature. Only in America did they show it on TV. The first week on *DYNASTY*, I had a big shock: I thought I

can't do it! I can't get the rhythm, I can't act, I had no time to rehearse! I have a problem with the language, because I haven't been to England for a long time, I've only acted in French and Italian and German. So I had a little problem with the language.

SS: And they always change the dialogue on the set, don't they?

HB: All the time! For me, it's hell! It's hell because it interferes with my acting, because I feel insecure with my lines and then I'm conscious, I can't really act. I have to think of my acting, think of my lines, and the pronunciation and the grammar. And I can't improvise because they don't want that, they want the lines as they're written and that's it! We changed the director, too. It takes me personally to know a person, the way he directs. It takes me two or three days, understanding what he wants! On *DYNASTY*, any moment you can get close to him personally and have contact with the person, he's gone! So you have to start all over again and make the effort to make him understand, so it is hell!

SS: The regular cast, of course, is probably used to the routine.

HB: They arrive, they don't, they know what they have to play, they know the directors, they worked with them 10,000 times already, so they're old friends like a big family—and I'm there, totally like a fish out of water! (Laughs) Thank God I know Linda Evans, I know Joan Collins—but the rest, I don't know anybody! It's like a factory, it's not me! It's not my way of acting, it's not my way the hair is done, how the makeup is done! I mean, I don't want to knock them down, but I didn't know this kind of work exists! I found out that TV actors are totally different from cinema actors. I only thought that exists with cinema actors and theater actors, it's a different kind of acting.

SS: What do you think of the various biographies written about Visconti?

HB: I hate the Visconti books because it's all fakes, all false! The one by a woman, by a journalist, is terrible! That's all false!

SS: The book by Geoffrey Nowell-Smith dealt mainly with Visconti's Italian nobility and didn't cover his sexuality or anything else, while *A Screen of Time* by Monica Stirling was more of a scandal sheet.

HB: This is all false! All the drugs and things and sexuality, they were all her nasty, journalistic mind! Terrible! She says she's a great friend of Visconti, but it's not true because I have been next to him for 10 years and he only saw her from time to time, when he went to London to direct at the Covent Garden Opera House. He ate several times lunch with her at Lorenzetti's, but he was never close friends with her, I'm sorry! She had nothing to do with Visconti. She didn't know him, so I never thought she would get it together to write a book about him. But I wouldn't have helped. If a writer who really knew Luchino asked me, I would have contributed, yes—but not with a journalist. She's sensational, horny, we called it. (Laughs) And just wanted to make money out of it because nobody ever wrote a book about him. I could

have written, but I can't! I only know 10 years of his life, 12 years.

SS: Still, sexuality is important, because it affects one's work. For instance, a heterosexual director would not have directed *A DEATH IN VENICE* as Visconti did.

HB: No, but Thomas Mann had homosexual tendencies.

SS: As you said, Visconti's films are autobiographical. For instance, your character in *CONVERSATION PIECE* was based on his relationship with you.

HB: Yes, which was very difficult. I trusted him and had respect and said, "You know, you never put me down." He had no reason to do so. He didn't really put me down, but I saw how he saw certain situations. Luchino was very, very close to his mother, very close to his family and towards his sister and his first brother, who died in the war, and the father who was homosexual. He saw his mother in Silvana Mangano, because she was as grand as a pearl.

SS: She played Tadzio's mother in *DEATH IN VENICE*.

HB: He changed the boy who played Tadzio. He wasn't beautiful any more, I saw him when he was 19 and he wasn't good looking any more. He grew up!

SS: When was the last time you saw Visconti?

HB: When he died. I had dinner with him at eight o'clock in Rome and he had some fever. I had the dinner at eight o'clock because I had a plane at midnight for Rio de Janeiro. He had a fever, but he always had a fever already so it was nothing new. And when I arrived in Rio, he was dead. What are you going to do? I had dinner with him and then he didn't recover. And me on the plane getting drunk. I was a widow at age 32.

SS: What happened to you immediately after Visconti's death?

HB: Well, I lost some movies after the death of Visconti. I had a big problem, my own problem, and I couldn't work for three years. I was on drugs and alcohol, I didn't get up any more, I didn't like my work any more. I had a big breakdown. I wasn't prepared to fight against those intrigues of the business, because I had always Luchino who solved the problems and the jealousies and told me who I have to see and who I shouldn't see, who is dangerous and who is not dangerous. I couldn't forgive him for dying and leaving me.

SS: He was like

HB: A father! A teacher!

SS: Some letters to you from Visconti were published, weren't they? People expected them to be sentimental, since you were lovers, but they were more like those of an angry father to a child than a man to his lover.

HB: Yes, and they were stolen! They were stolen, because they publish them in a terrible paper, one of these terrible, lousy papers! Of course I gave a call to the lawyer and we never found out how they got them. We couldn't do anything.

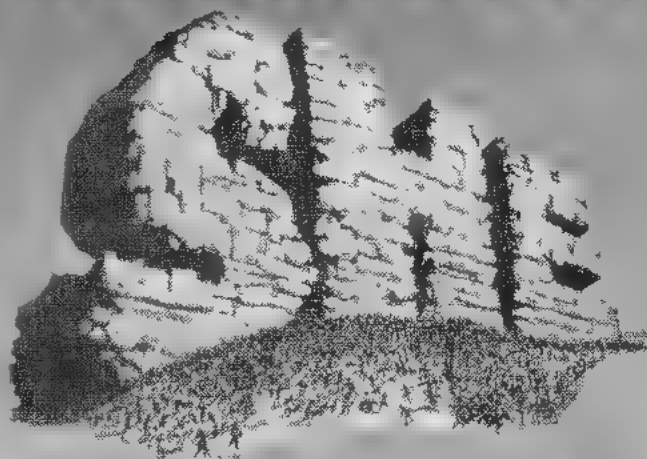
SS: One last question. If you had your life to do all over again, would you do it all over again?

HB: Even the shitty movies!

SS: Even them?

HB: Yes, yes—I have no regrets.

# EMPIRE OF THE IMAGINATION



## WHO MUST BE OBAYED

by Lelia Loban

On June 22, 1856, Henry Rider Haggard, the eighth of William and Ella Haggard's 10 children, was born in Bradenham, Norfolk, England. Rider started life sickly and jaundiced. His intelligent, sensitive mother, born and brought up in Colonial India, couldn't protect him from his father, a domestic despot with a violent temper and rigidly old-fashioned ideas. Disapproving of the boy's vivid imagination as unmasculine, William picked on Rider, calling him stupid and lazy, unlikely ever to amount to anything.

Indeed, Rider Haggard never excelled in school and never proved particularly adept at earning money by conventional means. Yet, by the time he died in London in 1925, this "lazy" fellow had written 68 books, 57 of them novels. His closest friends included Rudyard Kipling and Andrew Lang. Among Haggard's romances (as adventure stories were called in Victorian England), *King Solomon's Mines* and *She* now rank among the best-loved classics of the genre.

Curiously enough, his hostile father set him up for this success. In 1875, William secured Rider an appointment to join Sir Henry Bulwer's staff in the colonial government of Natal, in Africa. Rider lived and worked there (off and on) during the next six years. Later his personal knowledge of Africa lent credibility to his most memorable novels, stories about lost races and pagan cults.

In 1879, near the beginning of the Boer War, Rider married Mariana Louisa ("Louie") Margitson. In 1881, they returned to England permanently following the birth of their son, Jock. Their stable (though unromantic) marriage survived Rider's quick depletion of her small inheritance. Rider studied just enough law to pass his examinations for barrister, a career he pursued halfheartedly thereafter, though he preferred farming. Louie, a good mother to Jock and his younger sisters, Angela and Lillah, provided a calm, balancing influence.

Nobody really knows why Rider Haggard tried writing, but success came quickly. In 1885, his third published





novel, *King Solomon's Mines* (1885), became a phenomenal best-seller. He almost destroyed this budding reputation, when he plagiarized a poem in another novel, *Jess* (1887). Despite the plagiarism scandal, his sixth novel, *She, A History of Adventure* (first serialized in *Graphic*, from October 1886 to January 1887, then published as a book in 1887), sold out its first edition of 10,000 copies in a few weeks and kept right on selling, to this day.

She is purportedly the memoir of a Cambridge scholar, Horace Holly. Holly's friend, M. L. Vincey, entrusts him with a letter and a large, iron box, with instructions (and money) to take charge of Vincey's young son, Leo, then give him the box and the letter on his 25th birthday. The senior Vincey then commits suicide. Holly adopts the now-orphaned little boy and gives him a good education. Leo grows into a handsome, blonde lion of a man, "brilliant and keen witted, but no scholar." In contrast, Holly, an intellectual, looks so brutish that people call him "the Baboon" and women recoil from him.

On his 25th birthday, Leo reads the letter and opens the box, full of ancient artifacts. According to legend, he's the direct descendant of Kallikrates, a Greek-descended priest of Isis in ancient Egypt. Kallikrates fell in love with Pharaoh's daughter, Amenartas Ayesha, a jealous priestess who prolonged her youth and life indefinitely by bathing in a mysterious Pillar of Fire, tried to seduce Kallikrates. She murdered him for rejecting her wanton advances.

Amenartas bore Kallikrates a son, Tsisthenes ("Mighty Avenger"). Before her own death, she left him and his descendants the task of avenging the death of Kallikrates. The family eventually took the Roman name of Vin dex, later corrupted to Vincey.

The writings of more recent ancestors claim that Ayesha lives on in Africa. (Haggard, in one of many scholarly "editor's notes," instructs readers to pronounce her name "Assha," a suggestion which, thankfully, very few readers follow.) There, she rules a lost race, the Amahagger, in the hidden city of Kor. The Amahagger, descended from survivors of a civilization that sired the ancient Egyptians, have diluted the bloodline through unions with Africans and Arabs.

Intrigued, but mostly on a lark, Leo takes Holly and faithful servant Job to Africa, to investigate this wild story. After many perils, they locate the Amahagger, led by Bilali, trusted servant of She-who-must-be-obeyed. One of the Amahagger women, Ustane, boldly claims Leo as her husband. The tribe begins guiding the travelers through a secret labyrinth of caves, toward the lost city hidden in the crater of a not-quite-dormant volcano.

In Bilali's absence, the tribe turns on the travellers and tries to hot-pot them. This barbaric rite, prelude to a cannibal feast, means killing someone by forcing a white-hot iron pot over his head. The travellers are losing the battle, but Bilali arrives in time to stop the slaughter. He leads the party safely to Kor.

Holly learns that Ayesha, "She-who-must-be-obeyed," witnessed the attempted cannibal dinner, through visions in a pool of water. She tells him, "It is no magic—that is a dream of ignorance. There is no such thing as magic, though there is such a thing as knowledge of the hidden ways of Nature." (She's discovered TV news!) Ayesha is heavily veiled because any man who sees her face falls in love with her. She unveils for poor old prickly Holly, who is instantly smitten.

Sentencing the guilty Amahagger to execution by torture, She justifies herself to Holly. "How thinkest thou that I rule these people? I have but a regiment of guards to do my bidding, therefore it is not by force. It is by terror. My empire is of the imagination." She also tells him, "There is no such thing as Death, although there may be a thing called Change."

Leo nearly dies of his wounds before Ayesha bothers to look in on him. Recognizing him as the reincarnation of dead Kallikrates, she heals Leo with her own brew of drugs, then vaporizes the preserved corpse of the first Kallikrates, tended lovingly for two centuries. She wants to give Leo everlasting life as her consort, through the Pillar of Fire. When Ustane won't step aside, Ayesha jealously murders her. Appalled, Leo rejects She. Ayesha deploys her secret weapon, unveiling for Leo. She hands him a knife and invites him to kill her. He can't do it.

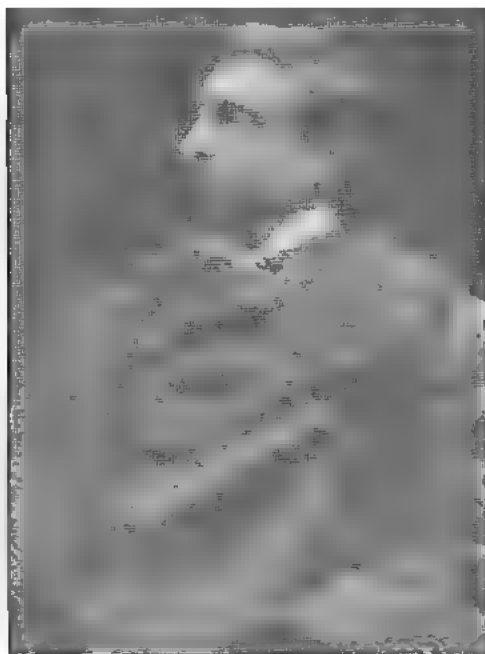
Despite his horror and outrage, lovesick Leo (a passive man even when not bewitched) accompanies Ayesha to the cave of the Pillar of Fire, which springs from the rocks at intervals, like a geyser. Holly writes, "... from far away there came the dreadful muttering noise, that grew and grew to a crash and a roar, which combined in itself all that is terrible and yet splendid in the possibilities of the mind. Nearer it came, and nearer yet, till it was close upon us, rolling down like all the thunder-wheels of heaven behind the horses of the lightning. On it travelled, and with it the glorious blinding cloud of many colored light, and stood before us for a space, slowly revolving, as it seemed to us; then, accompanied by its attendant pomp of sound, it passed away I knew not whither."

Evidently She has entered the flame only once, to achieve her immortality. When She bathes in the flame again, to prove to Leo that it's safe, the second exposure reverses the effect of the first. In an instant, She

ages all of her more than 2,000 years, shriveling into a hideous little monkey-like creature before She dies. Having (inadvertently) performed the Vincey family duty, Lion and Baboon escape from the caves to tell the tale.

Rider Haggard kept on writing until the last months of his life. Never a "literary" author, he sometimes wrote sloppy prose, overstuffed with florid diction, thees and thous. Still, unlike the scribblers of cheap potboilers, he based his romances on intelligent questions about substantial philosophical ideas. Educated people could read Haggard without gagging. At the same time, he had that pulp writer's knack for telling such a ripping good yarn that readers couldn't resist turning pages and wanting more.

While living in Africa, instead of contemptuously distancing himself from "savages," Haggard had made friends with Africans, whom he liked and respected. According to biographer D. S. Higgins (*Rider Haggard: A Biography*, Stein and Day, 1983), Haggard may have taken a black African mistress. Understandably, some of Haggard's African friends reproached him for perpetuating fallacies in his fiction, with his cannibals and other lurid fantasies. (In all of recorded history, the only documented incidents of cannibalism in Africa have involved either crimes committed by the insane or rare cases of starving people desperately eating their dead.) Unavoidably, the whole idea of Ayesha, a sexy white goddess who rules a cannibal tribe in Africa, smacks of colonialist racism, despite Haggard's care to make clear its abnormality.



H. Rider Haggard



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In his first book (nonfiction), Haggard wrote that the Boers' African expansionist plan "is supported by arguments about the superiority of the white races and their obvious destiny of rule. It is, I confess, one that I look upon as little short of wicked. I could never discern a superiority so great in ourselves as to authorize us, by right divine as it were, to destroy the coloured man and take his lands. It is difficult to see why a Zulu, for instance, has not as much right to live in his own way as a Boer or an Englishman" (*Cetywayo and His White Neighbours*, 1882).

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Ayesha found a new kind of immortality, in at least 14 English language movies—so far. Spanning more than a century, they exemplify most of the major developments in film technology and style. All but two of the seven silent

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**ABOVE:** Ayesha (Alice Delysia) exerts her considerable powers over her subjects as Horace Holly (Sidney Bland) observes apprehensively in the 1916 silent production of *SHE*. **RIGHT:** The Immortal She (Betty Blythe) displays her form divine for Kallikrates (Carlyle Blackwell) in the 1925 version of Haggard's tale. He's not having any, though, so she kills him.

*SHE* touches on nearly the entire outline of Haggard's plot, with great economy. The first reel shows Pharaoh's daughter, Amenartas, and her husband, Kallikrates, fleeing Egypt together in 350 B.C. The Thanhouser Company shot the beautifully photographed outdoor scenes, with a real camel and boats, on location in coastal New York, near the studio.

Thanhouser scrubbed most of the colonialist content out of Haggard's story. The only African face appears on the "Negro's Head" rock, carved into a gigantic caricature bust, that's the landmark for Ayesha's territory in Africa. White actors play the Amahagger, dressed like cave men and carrying long spears. Their leader, the distinguished, white-haired Billali, dresses in a biblical-looking robe. The scenery looks vaguely Orientalist, in a style popular (in only slightly less florid guise) with interior decorators at the time.

In her African cave-city of Kor, Ayesha feels a psychic vision coming on. In this delightful scene, instead of gazing into a pool of water (as She does in the novel), Ayesha sinks down into a chair and waves her graceful hands and arms in an abracadabra pass at some curtains. The curtains glide open, just the way they might in a theater, to reveal a little movie screen, showing Ayesha's vision of the approaching travellers—as a silent movie-within-a-movie! Movie magic, indeed!

At first, Ayesha is friendly to both Kallikrates and Amenartas. She offers to show them the sacred flame. Leaving their baby with a servant, the trusting couple follows Ayesha into the caves. As She demonstrates the rejuvenating power of the flame, she reveals her hidden agenda, to take Kallikrates away from Amenartas. The action cuts abruptly from Ayesha in the flame to the horrified Amenartas, outside the cave, retrieving her baby and fleeing. Hell hath no fury: scorned, Ayesha strikes Kallikrates dead, according to the intertitle. Unfortunately, either the somewhat tattered surviving copy of the movie is missing a scene or Thanhouser inexplicably weakened the drama by letting this important murder take place off camera. Another intertitle displays Amenartas's vow that her son or his descendants will live to avenge the murder of her husband. After Amenartas runs away, the camera returns to Ayesha, now lamenting over the dead body of Kallikrates.

The second reel shifts the action to the 19th century, when Holly accepts the casket of ancestral relics during Leo Vincey's boyhood, then gives it to Leo on his 25th birthday.



Most movies of *She* don't follow Haggard's description of Holly as monstrously ugly, but in this version, William C. Cooper plays Holly as a fright, with a bushy, messy beard topped by an upturned, Snidely Whiplash mustache. With the loyal Holly, Leo follows his ancestors' clues to Africa and finds Ayesha still mooning over the well-preserved corpse of Kallikrates. Of course, she's seen Leo coming, on her magic movie screen.

She seizes on Leo as the reincarnation of Kallikrates, and puts such a whammy on him that he falls in lust with her despite his determination to resist. Ayesha destroys the ancient Egyptian corpse by throwing some liquid on it. The body disappears in a simple but nifty matte shot sequence, as smoke and fire flash from head to toe.

When She tries to show Leo how the flame of everlasting youth works, to entice him into eternity at her side, "The quality of the fire changes, causing 'She' to shrivel up, grow suddenly old and die," says the intertitle. A child or midget in grotesque old-age makeup replaces Marguerite Snow during this transformation and death scene, accomplished with matte shots and double exposures. Leo and Holly go back to England, where they burn the records of their journey, a scene described on the intertitle but cut to a fraction of a second in the damaged surviving print.

James Cruze, a sturdy-looking man who was one-quarter Ute Indian, later played the lead in dozens of Thanhouser movies. According to the October, 1911 issue of *Billboard*, he was one of 17 children, born and brought up as a Mormon on a reservation in Utah, where (he said) his ancestors had burned his maternal grandmother as a witch for giving birth to twins. Caveat emptor: he was notorious for telling colorful but inconsistent stories about himself.

With the demise of Thanhouser's studio in 1917, Cruze headed for Hollywood. Like so many other actors and directors of that period, he saw his career fade with the advent of the talkies, though he directed one pretty good feature, *I Cover the Waterfront* (1933). Leading an increasingly drunken, dissipated, and chaotic life, he hopped from studio to studio until he finished his career.



making B movies for Republic, before his bankruptcy in 1930 and near penniless death in 1942.

Quite stunningly beautiful Marguerite Snow, her dark hair cascading down her back, played her third movie role in SHE. Snow went on to star in about three dozen Thanhouser movies, as the stud's most reliable leading lady. She lost interest, and her career faltered after Thanhouser went out of business in 1917. Snow made her last movie in 1925, though she lived until 1958.

As fascinating as a glimpse into the evolution of the motion picture, the 1911 SHE looks far less crudely made than most films of that era. The flickering, slightly jerky appearance of the stationary camera is unavoidable with the hand-cranked equipment of the period, no matter how skilled the cameraman. At this point, the acting resembles mime, unable to use the subtleties, as they would on stage, the actors in some movies resort to extremely broad gestures, with facial expressions exaggerated to the point that they're unintentionally funny. Today, actors avoid "indicating" in favor of trying to act the way the character would behave in real life. In 1911 movie actors did nothing but indicate, forcefully, to make sure the neophyte audience would "get it." This cast, evidently well directed by Cruze or Nichols (or both?), tones down the excessive mime gestures. The acting looks far more natural than average for movies of this period.

In a way, the early moving picture functions as an ever-changing illustration for a synopsis of a book. The intertitles appear against a black screen, before the action they describe; read the words, then look at the pictures. For a modern audience, this sequence slows down the story while killing suspense, but the 1911 viewer, still learning how to watch a movie, needed the director and editor to make everything clear and to move the story along at a slower pace than suits the modern viewer, trained from birth to follow the blitz speed of the boob tube.

Another silent version of the story, a parody of Haggard, came out under the title of HIS EGYPTIAN AFFINITY, in August, 1915. Al Christie (director of more than 70 movies) directed this two-reeler for Nesfor, distributed by Universal Film Manufacturing. Eddie Lyons played a character loosely based on Leo Vincey, with Victor a Forde as an Egyptian Princess resembling Ayesha. Forde had a brief but astonishingly lush career. Before she retired to raise a family, she made well over 100 movies between 1912 and 1919. Lyons, born in 1886, made about six dozen movies between 1911 and his early death in 1926, the year he made his last movie.

No prints of HIS EGYPTIAN AFFINITY are known to survive. The plot reduces Haggard's story to a dream, in which the Egyptian Princess and her eternal lover, reincarnated 2,000 years after their death, flee through the desert from a murderous Bedouin. An anonymous reviewer in the August 28, 1915 issue of *The Moving Picture World* called the movie "A farce comedy, well produced, and enacted in an enthusiastic manner. The play is full of rapid action, and has evidently been produced at some expense. It deals, as would be supposed, with a subject almost wholly Oriental, where a spring touched in a sarcophagus two thousand years later than the period of the opening scenes, causes the dead to return and the feud of the past is recommenced and finished with a flourish."

William G. B. Barker and Lisle Lucoque coproduced and codirected another silent movie of SHE, released March 14, 1916 in Great Britain. Lucoque had bought the film rights from H. Rider Haggard, French-born Alice Delysia starred as Ayesha, with Henry Victor (English but raised in Germany) as Leo Vincey. The cast also included Sidney Brand as Horace Holm, Blanche Forsythe as Ustane, Jack Denton as Job and J. Hasungs Batson as Billali.

Today, little is known about this lost, brief movie (1,645 meters long), although still unearthed by Phil Leithner for his useful new book, *Rud and Kipling and Sir Henry Rider*

*Haggard on Screen Stage, Radio and Television*. McFarland, 2000, show an extravagantly costumed, exotic-looking production, its palace scenes packed with extras. Technical reports that "This was the second film directed by Lucoque after he had formed his own production company, Lucoque Ltd. in January 1915 with a capital of [pound sign] 6,000." Haggard happily reported in his diary on June 3, 1915, "The S.E. film is going very well, nearly two million people having paid to see already."

Also in 1915, Will Arda made a pirate version of SHE, but Haggard sued to suppress it. It was never shown. There are no known copies.

The next year, the Fox Film Corporation made a larger five-reel SHE, released in April 1917 and now lost. William Fox produced and Kenean Buel directed. According to the description in the American Film Institute catalogue of feature films for 1911-1920, and the plot summary by an anonymous writer for the April 28, 1917 issue of *The Moving Picture World*, the scenario writer, Mary Murillo, followed the familiar basic outline of Haggard's story. Edward Weitzel, reviewing this movie for the May 5, 1917 issue of *The Moving Picture World*, says that Murillo "has managed to condense it [the novel] into five reels and made everything reasonably clear."

The title role went to Valeska Suratt, a sultry vamp (one of Theda Bara's rivals), with Ben L. Taggart as Leo and Miriam Foulke as Ayesha's competitor, Ustane. The cast also included Tom Burrough (Holly), Wigney Percival (Billali) and Martin Reagan (Job). Weitzel criticized the performance as lackluster. While he thought that "Kenean Buel's direction of the production has many points of excellence, the one note he has failed to sound is the eyrie [sic] feeling that pervades the original work."

"Fred" in *Variety* (April 27, 1917) liked the movie better and called it "a rattling good feature." "Fred" didn't think much of Valeska Suratt's acting skills, but he appreciated "the long piece of gauze in which she enwraps herself, allowing the outline of her form to be strikingly visible, at times permitting the covering to slip to such an extent there is nothing left to the imagination. This alone will be reason enough to establish the box office drawing quality of the film." He predicted that SHE "will prove a big money-maker."

In Ayesha's final encounter with the sacred flame, she devolves into an ape before her death, in a parody of Charles Darwin's theory of evolution. He had published *The Descent of Man* in 1871; the controversy showed no sign of dying down half a century later. (The Scopes "monkey trial" would take place in July of 1925.) In another bit of controversy, evidently this version of SHE, unlike most others, used black actors to portray the Amahagger tribe. Weitzel ends his review with the strange (and, to modern eyes, offensive) remark that, "One or two flashes of a band of naked negro boys dancing around a comedy character should be eliminated. In this enlightened age none of us need an ocular demonstration to be convinced that little black Africans are never told to keep their hands out of their pants pockets." (One assumes that this remark refers to the genitals and to the then-common practice of discouraging masturbation.)

The last, longest and most technically sophisticated of the silent movies of SHE came out on May 5, 1925, from Europaisch Film-Allianz in Germany, in cooperation with A to X Products in the United Kingdom. Lee Bradford Pictures distributed the movie in the United States. Originally, Lisle Lucoque intended to direct, but ill health forced him to withdraw. He soon went bankrupt, before he committed suicide in November 1925. Leander De Cordova and G. B. Samuelson directed this movie, also known by its German title, MIRAKEL DER LIEBE. Arthur A. Lee and G. B. Samuelson produced.

Continued on page 78







by Troy  
Howarth

# HORROR ITALIAN STYLE

## Spotlight on the Mario Bava Collection

To devotees of Italian Horror, Mario Bava is a name that inspires both reverence and nostalgia. The gifted cinematographer-turned-director made his name in the sixties and seventies with a series of colorful, perverse, and darkly humorous horror films and thrillers. Never one to confine himself to any one genre, he also brought his distinctive signature to bear on everything from James Bond parodies to Spaghetti Westerns. Fortunately for fans of the late director, many of his best films are now on DVD often in deluxe editions that properly reflect the original intentions of their creator. This issue's *HORROR ITALIAN STYLE* focuses on several releases from Image Entertainment's Mario Bava Collection.

In 17th-century Moldavia, Princess Asa (Barbara Steele) is sentenced to death for practicing witchcraft. Two centuries later, Asa returns from the grave to exact vengeance on her descendants, including her virginal twin, Katia (Steele).

After distinguishing himself as a brilliant cinematographer and special-effects artist, Mario Bava became one of the key players in the horror genre with the international success of this 1960 feature, his first solo directorial offering. Thanks to its heady mixture of stylized, monochromatic cinematography and bursts of graphic gore and explicitly implicit eroticism, *BLACK SUNDAY* shocked critics and attracted filmgoers of all ages. With success comes failure, however, and in retrospect it seems inevitable that few of the director's progressively grim and personal projects attained this film's level of popularity.

Image Entertainment's DVD of *BLACK SUNDAY* marks their second entry in the ongoing Mario Bava Collection, and it is a real stunner. The disc presents the English-dubbed edition prepared for export by the Italian producers. Titled *THE MASK OF SATAN*, this version was rejected by AIP's Samuel Z. Arkoff when he acquired the distribution rights for the United States. Consequently, this version bears a different soundtrack (music and dialogue) and additional footage, all of which will surprise those accustomed to AIP's domestic edition. As this is one of the few Bava films to suffer noticeably

from poor English dubbing, a more desirable approach would have been to provide a subtitled presentation with the option of an English track. Nevertheless, it is for its haunting imagery that the film is remembered, and in this regard the disc is a veritable feast for the eyes.

Bava's silky black-and-white photography is shown to its best advantage, with deep blacks, clean whites, and a pleasing variety of grey tones. The source material is generally pristine, only the opening titles are afflicted with noticeable scratching and negative dirt. The film has been correctly letterboxed at 1.85, and is so clean and sharp that it could almost pass for a contemporary feature. To test a cliché, however, they don't make 'em like this anymore!

Less impressive is the mono soundtrack, though realistically this should come as no surprise. Image has done their best to resynch the dialogue (which now begins to actually approximate the lip movements!) and to clean up all the pops and background hiss. The result is smooth, clean, but thoroughly unspectacular, an effect little helped by one of the film's weaker elements, the somnolent music score by Roberto Nicolosi (which is still preferable to the Les Baxter replacement score).

The disc is further complemented by an array of mouth-watering supplementary materials, including the seldom-seen European trailer, liner notes by Tim Lucas (who contributes notes to the other DVD titles as well), notes on a scene included only in the Italian edition (though why the scene itself is not included is anybody's guess), a Mario Bava biography/filmography, and a gallery of production stills and promotional art. The disc also includes an audio commentary by Lucas. Though the information he reveals is fascinating, his somewhat monotonous delivery (sounding as though he is reading directly from written notes) and several lengthy passages of silence is a drawback.

A prostitute is hounded by phone calls from her psychotic ex pimp in "The Telephone," in "The Wurdalak," a young nobleman seeks refuge with a poor family, only to find that their patriarch has been transformed into a vampire; and in "The Drop of Water," a nurse is plagued

by a guilty conscience after stealing a dead woman's ring. These are the tales that comprise *BLACK SABBATH* (1963), Mario Bava's beloved anthology starring the great Boris Karloff.

Thanks to the efforts of a core group of people (including producer Alfredo Leone), many of Bava's distinctive films are finding their way to home video. Few of these releases were awaited with greater enthusiasm than this one—and yet, enthusiasm curdled into controversy when word got out that Image Entertainment was only releasing the Italian language director's cut. To those who love Bava, this seemed the only logical decision. So then, why all the disgruntled faces? The answer is simple. Boris Karloff. The peerless horror icon gave one of his most popular performances in this film, and the idea that his voice was not preserved on this deluxe edition turned a number of fans off the idea of purchasing the disc. It's that simple, and that complex.

Like so many Italian films, *BLACK SABBATH* was shot without live sound, in a variety of different languages. In any given scene, the performers range from English to French to Italian. The reason for this is one of simple expediency: since an actual, final sound mix was not done until the post-production phase, it facilitated matters to allow the actors to speak in the language with which they were most comfortable, thus enabling shooting to proceed without much concern for the spoken word. This was standard procedure in Italian films, and indeed Mario Bava once joked with director Raoul Walsh that the technique of shooting multiple takes of flubbed dialogue could be rectified by panning away from the actors and looping the dialogue in over innocuous insert shots. In any event, the emphasis on imagery over dialogue is typical of many Italian horror films, especially those directed by Bava. Of course, it's standard procedure for the name actors to loop their own dialogue, while the lesser-known performers are dubbed by professional vocal artists—mysterious voices without a face, whose only claim to fame stems from these oft-neglected B-movie imports. But in the case of *BLACK SABBATH*, a fairly convoluted production deal muddled the waters further still.

BLACK SABBATH was a coproduction between American International Pictures, Galatea Productions, and Societe Cinematographique. AIP's affiliation with Mario Bava began in 1960, when they acquired the US distribution rights to BLACK SUNDAY. A tremendous box office and critical success, the film established Bava as a first-rate director. AIP's Samuel Z. Arkoff, knowing a good investment when he saw one, began to follow the shy Italian's career with interest. It was soon apparent that Bava was aiming his films exclusively to mature, adult viewers and that he couldn't be bothered with tailoring his approach to suit AIP's targeted teen crowd. In playing an active role in the production of BLACK SABBATH, however, Arkoff found himself in the position to curtail Bava's morbid vision. Nevertheless, Arkoff's contributions were firmly limited to the English-language edition. When the time came to prepare the final cut for the English-speaking provinces, Arkoff called the shots. Worried that Bava was making too little of Karloff's role as narrator, Arkoff instructed the director to film some additional host sequences to link together the three stories. Though filmed with his customary visual verve, these sequences break the mood and Bava

was wise to exclude them from the European version, over which he had control.

Arkoff was also behind one of the film's most unusual episodes. Desperate to alleviate the film's unusually grim mood, Arkoff instructed Bava to inject a bit of humor into the proceedings. The director quickly devised a comedic finale that met with Karloff's approval, and so he filmed the segment (which depicts Karloff as he races through a forest, astride a magnificent horse—until the camera pulls back, revealing that the animal is really an old hobby horse and the forest a fabrication on a soundstage). This finale, now available to the American public thanks to Image, remains one of the most audacious in any horror film. Arkoff didn't "get it," and removed the scene in its entirety. (The AIP version ends with a simple, anticlimactic shot of a horse running off in fright). Further nonsensical revisionism took place without Bava's participation. The order of the stories was jumbled, some dialogue was rewritten to obscure a lesbian subtext (just how shocking this was in 1963 is anybody's guess, but Arkoff was certainly convinced that it would cause problems), and Roberto Nicolesi's excellent score was jettisoned in favor of a Les Baxter composition. Arkoff naturally

tapped Karloff to dub his performance, but no such precautions were taken with the Italian edition, which was apparently never dubbed into English at any point. That's all well and good, but what's the point?

The net effect of AIP's meddling was the ruin of one of Mario Bava's most ambitious films—though it certainly didn't hurt the box office, since BLACK SABBATH became one of AIP's biggest successes. In its original form, BLACK SABBATH is a classic of its genre. Bava's customary visual panache and dark sense of fatal irony are consistently in evidence, ensuring that there is seldom a dull moment. That said, BLACK SABBATH is not a perfect film. The first segment, "The Telephone," is a sleek and efficient thriller, but its skeletal brevity prevents it from attaining any real emotional impact. Compared to the director's next, and not entirely dissimilar sexual thriller THE WHIP AND THE BODY (1963), it strikes one as a skit more than anything else. Even so, it is markedly superior to the rewritten AIP version, which imposes a wholly implausible supernatural angle onto the proceedings. The second segment, "The Wurdalak," benefits from Karloff's brilliant portrayal

Boris Karloff had one of his greatest latter-day roles as an undead family man in Mario Bava's BLACK SABBATH (1963), though the Image Entertainment DVD contains only the film's original cut and not the American International version featuring Karloff's voice.







of the vampire *Gorga* and from the director's splendid sense of color and composition, but suffers from uneven pacing and a bizarre lapse in continuity (the inclusion of a daylight exterior during a nighttime sequence). No such problems plague *"The Drop of Water,"* which stands as Bava's finest (and most genuinely frightening) essay in psychological terror. Though flawed, the final film is a work of delicate beauty that deserves to be seen by a wider audience.

This being part of the Mario Bava Collection, it's fitting that the Italian version should get the deluxe treatment. Still, the backlash deserves attention. Image has already released both versions of *LISA AND THE DEVIL* (1972) as a double feature DVD, which begs the question: why not release both versions of *BLACK SABBATH*? No doubt the reason stems from the fact that the American version (which is owned by a different licensor) is already available on video from VCI Entertainment. The costs for acquiring this version would have made such a move impractical, but the important thing to understand is that both versions are available for viewing. If the Italian one has received better treatment, this comes after years of neglect. Now is the first time that this version, one of the few films Bava spoke fondly of in interviews, has been made available to the American public. Such a debut is clearly deserving of the kind of love and care Image has obviously lavished on this title.

Does the Italian version suffer from the absence of Karloff's famous voice? Inevitably, it does. However, the loss pales in comparison to the pleasures the film affords—pleasures quite beyond the juvenile mindset of AIP's edition. Like so many Mario Bava films, the original version of *BLACK SABBATH* is a horror film made for adults.

The Image DVD does a magnificent job of presenting Bava's vision. The color and detail are phenomenal, and there are moments that look almost three dimensional. The picture is perfectly letterboxed at 1.78 and has been enhanced for wide screen TV. Though not 100 percent free of blemishes, the source material (mostly a French print, with the titles taken from a rougher Italian source) is in remarkably good condition. The digital mono soundtrack sounds as good as can be expected and serves up Nicolosi's flavorful score with just the right amount of oomph. The removable, easy-to-read yellow subtitles are largely confined to the bottom black bar, though they occasionally protrude into the frame. The package is rounded out by the usual Mario Bava filmography biography, a Boris Karloff filmography, and a fun European trailer (in Italian with English subtitles).

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John Harrington (Stephen Forsyth) seems to have it all: good looks, money, a successful fashion business, homicidal mania. Driven by a half-remembered childhood trauma, he feels compelled to

slaughter women in bridal gowns. He soon comes under the suspicion of Inspector Russell (Jesus Puente), and things become further complicated when the ghost of John's recently "departed" wife Mildred (Laura Betti) starts haunting him night and day...

**HATCHET FOR THE HONEYMOON** (1968) is a typically unorthodox Mario Bava giallo (ie, Italian thriller). Having defined the genre with the Hitchcockian *THE GIRL WHO KNEW TOO MUCH* (1962) and the truly Sadeian *BLOOD AND BLACK LACE* (1964), the impish director proceeded to deconstruct it in three progressively sardonic thrillers: *HATCHET*, *FIVE DOLLS FOR AN AUGUST MOON* (1970), and *A BAY OF BLOOD* (1971).

Like the films that follow it, *HATCHET* is hinged on a singularly perverse premise. In this case, the handsome lady killer is forced to murder in order to find out what makes him kill. The introduction of the supernatural, via Mildred's humorous haunting of her husband, and the absence of graphic bloodshed also help to distinguish the film from the average giallo. Nevertheless, the film is hampered by a disastrously inadequate central performance by Canadian actor-model Stephen Forsyth. There is, however, an abundance of good in the film, making it one of the director's most compelling, albeit flawed, works.

Image Entertainment's presentation is the shabbiest of their Mario Bava Collec-

tion releases to date. Culled from two source prints (one 35mm, one 16mm), there is nary an unblemished frame to behold. On the plus side, the colors are undeniably vivid and the contrast range is very pleasing. The image is letterboxed at 1.66, but a comparison with the overmatted Something Weird Video edition reveals a loss at the left-hand side of the frame, placing the actual ratio at approximately 1.75. The loss is minor, but one still wishes that the job had been done correctly.

Problematic as the picture is, the sound proves to be even more so. None of the previous video incarnations of this title sound particularly stellar, but this does not excuse the poor quality of the Image soundtrack. As it begins, the disc sounds appalling, with Sante Romitelli's beautiful music gurgling forth as if playing from speakers submerged in water. Following the credits, the sound improves, though it is never better than average.

Like the other entries in the Bava Collection, the packaging makes use of striking, original poster art. The liner notes reveal just how deeply Bava invested himself in this project (one of the few not filmed in his native Italy), but that's about it as far as supplements are concerned. A paltry still gallery and the standard Bava bio/filmography round out the package.

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Following the success of *BARON BLOOD* (1972), producer Alfredo Leone made Mario Bava an offer he couldn't refuse. Given the proverbial blank check and total creative freedom, Bava finally found himself in the position to realize a project he had long coveted...

*LISA AND THE DEVIL* tells the bewildering tale of Lisa Reimer (Elke Sommer), an American touring a little village in Spain. After visiting a mysterious antique shop, she becomes lost in a maze of back streets. Seeking refuge in a dilapidated villa, Lisa finds herself plunged into a nightmarish scenario presided over by a humorous butler (Telly Savalas) who may or may not be Satan.

After a successful debut at the 1973 Cannes Film Festival, *LISA AND THE DEVIL* ran smack into a producer's worst nightmare: no distribution companies were interested in buying it. According to Leone, Bava was "devastated," but nothing could prepare the director for what followed. Having invested \$1 million in an uncommercial proposition, Leone decided to recoup his investment by transforming the picture into a retitled, more saleable project. *THE HOUSE OF EXORCISM* tells a similar story, but only to a point. In this version, Lisa becomes possessed by the Devil. This being an EXORCIST clone, the film wheels in the tormented Father Michael (Robert Alda) to free Lisa from her suffering.

Owing to his love for the film and his loyalty to Leone, Bava actually had a hand in the transformation of his masterpiece. Perhaps hoping to salvage some shred of the film's dignity, the director immersed himself in the filming of the additional footage. However, when it became clear that the project was going in a direction that made him uncomfortable, Bava walked, leaving Leone to complete and assemble the alternate version. The end result is horrific in the worst sense of the word. Amid sloppily reedited passages from the original film, the viewer is subjected to bouts of "possessed" profanity, gallons of green bile, and enough Catholic guilt to fill several churches. Perhaps the kindest thing to say about *THE HOUSE OF EXORCISM* is nothing at all, though Robert Alda does a commendable job as the exorcist.

*LISA AND THE DEVIL* and *THE HOUSE OF EXORCISM* have both been issued separately on DVD, but Bava fans are advised to seek out the double-feature presentation. The former film is mastered from the same materials as the 1995 Elite Entertainment laser disc. Though it shares the LD's occasional patches of grain and several nearly monochromatic nighttime exteriors, it is, on the whole, a perfectly satisfying presentation of a fascinating movie. Like *LISA*, *HOUSE* is per-

fectly framed at 1.85. Although the colors are more vivid (sometimes, as in the nighttime scenes, noticeably so), the source material is in rougher shape, befitting its grindhouse origins. Both films offer a sharp, detailed image.

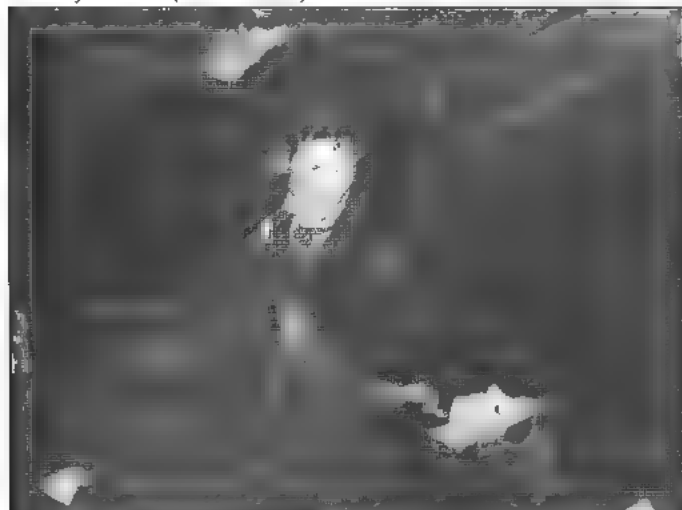
Soundwise, *HOUSE* has a more forceful presence. As on the Elite laserdisc, *LISA* has a clean but overly soft soundtrack. It is sometimes necessary to pump up the volume to catch all the dialogue. No such problems plague *HOUSE*, though there is the occasional hiss or background pop.

The double bill features a wealth of supplements. In addition to the usual Bava bio/filmography, there are filmographies for Telly Savalas and Elke Sommer and an unremarkable still gallery. An incomplete trailer for *LISA* and a near-porno sex scene (not filmed by Bava and never included in any release version) round out the former film, while the latter includes some wonderfully lurid theatrical and TV promos. Best of all is a running commentary by Alfredo Leone and Elke Sommer. Sommer's participation is tentative at best, but the gregarious and engaging Leone does enough talking for both. He delves into the genesis of *LISA*, his sometimes intense relationship with Bava (who disliked producers on principle), and his artistic and financial motivations for creating *THE HOUSE OF EXORCISM*. Though his anecdotes don't always have the ring of truth to them, he is never less than entertaining, making this one of the most wholly enjoyable audio commentaries this reviewer has ever encountered. The commentary is unique to the double feature, and is not included on the solitary releases of either film.

**BLACK SUNDAY \$24.99**  
**BLACK SABBATH \$24.99**  
**HATCHET FOR THE HONEYMOON \$24.99**  
**LISA AND THE DEVIL / THE HOUSE OF EXORCISM \$39.99**



**PAGE 70:** Barbara Steele (inset) made her horror film reputation in the dual roles of Katia and Princess Asa in Mario Bava's *BLACK SUNDAY* (1961). Adrej Gorobec (John Richardson) and a priest (Antonio Pierfederici) uncover a corpse. **LEFT:** Richardson and Steele enact an age-old horror ritual for *BLACK SUNDAY*. **RIGHT:** Telly Savalas is family butler (and devil?) to Alessio Orano and Alida Valli in *LISA AND THE DEVIL* (1972).



# BOOK ENDS

## The Scarlet Street Review of Books

### SAL MINEO

H. Paul Jeffers

Carroll & Graf, 2000

240 Pages—\$25

Along with *REBEL WITHOUT A CAUSE* (1955) costar James Dean, Sal Mineo was the quintessential American teenager in the decade best known for its sexual repression: the Fabulous Fifties. More than that, Mineo (and, arguably, Dean) was the quintessential American gay teenager. Furthermore, Mineo, like Dean, not only splashed sexual ambiguity across movie and TV screens, but was—despite a sprinkling of heterosexual romances—predominantly gay in real life.

In the fifties, the prejudice against homosexuality, which extended from the real life persecution of gay people by Senator Joe McCarthy and his loathsome band of witchhunters to accusations of a gay relationship between comic book characters Batman and Robin by author Fredric Wertham, was such that no public figure dared step out of the closet. Such was the lingering homophobia that, when the increasingly frank Sal Mineo was murdered on February 12, 1976, his killer—when it was not suggested that he was a drug dealer—was immediately suspected of being a male sexual pickup. Drugs homosexuality they both suggested the same thing, a life lived on the wild side, a decadence, a seediness, a sense of "Well, he was asking for it."

What Mineo was asking for was the right to live his life on his own terms, and to succeed again in the business that had made him a star. He might well have succeeded, but for a chance encounter with a

complete stranger and a fatal blow with a knife. Sal Mineo was a star at the tender age of 15, and dead at age 37.

In *Sal Mineo: His Life, Murder, and Mystery*, H. Paul Jeffers, who knew the actor intimately in his final years, has written a riveting biography that's sympathetic without whitewashing its subject. He covers such well-known highlights of Mineo's career as *REBEL* and the stage play *FORTUNE AND MEN'S EYES* (1969), but doesn't neglect such minor work as *ESCAPE FROM THE PLANET OF THE APES* (1971). Considerable space is devoted to the *Scarlet Street* favorite *WHO KILLED TEDDY BEAR* (1965), including the part played by this magazine is shining a light on this forgotten work, which resulted in a revival in the mid-nineties.

More than James Dean the man he loved and whose memory he treasured all his short life, Sal Mineo was a rebel, an "erotic politician" in the words of a theater-program bio, and Jeffers' book does him full justice.

—Richard Valley

### RUDYARD KIPLING AND SIR HENRY RIDER HAGGARD

Philip Leibfried

McFarland & Co., 2000

Box 611, Jefferson, NC 28640

232 pages—\$45

Philip Leibfried exhumes many fine rarities for *Rudyard Kipling and Sir Henry Rider Haggard on Screen, Stage, Radio and Television*, a volume well organized and handsomely illustrated with documents and photographs. He begins with a biographical introduction about close pals Haggard and Kipling. For each author, Leibfried discusses each original work, then reviews its movie adaptations, in chronological order. Chapters about stage, radio, and television adaptations follow. Leibfried provides selected bibliography and an index, but no footnotes.

A quibble. Leibfried never spells out (though often the reader can deduce) which adaptations he truly reviews, and which ones he knows only from secondary sources. It's unlikely that Leibfried (born in 1948) has seen the 1916 movie of *SHE*, for instance, since no prints are known to survive. Of course, labelling any film or radio program as "lost" is dangerous, and probably evokes whatever lesser gods promptly disgorge those prints and tapes in well preserved condition from somebody's attic—but all the better, if an author alerts readers to things that need finding and preserving.

Leibfried limits his review citations to mainstream publications, such as *The London Times*, *Daily Variety*, and the silent

era's *The Moving Picture World*. Many of these reviewers disdain genre films, a bias Leibfried shares. Fans of loose adaptations with good entertainment value, not to mention "bad movies we love," will notice that Leibfried's praise or criticism depends heavily on the fidelity of an adaptation to the Kipling or Haggard original. For example, Leibfried hates the 1965 Hammer version of *SHE*: "Hammer Films, a minor British outfit, became known for their horror films beginning in the late 1950s with successful adaptations of *Frankenstein* and *Dracula*. Their version of *She* is a horror of a different sort, as it unmercifully mistreats the spirit of Haggard's classic tale." Yet, oddly, the book's cover features Ursula Andress and John Richardson in their roles from that very movie! (The cover sports other photos, but not of *SHE*.) Leibfried sufficiently distinguishes fact from opinion for the reader to surmise whether an adaptation might appeal to one's own tastes. Fans of exotic adventure movies will welcome this useful addition to the library.

—Lelia Lohan

### RESURRECTION ANGEL

William Mize

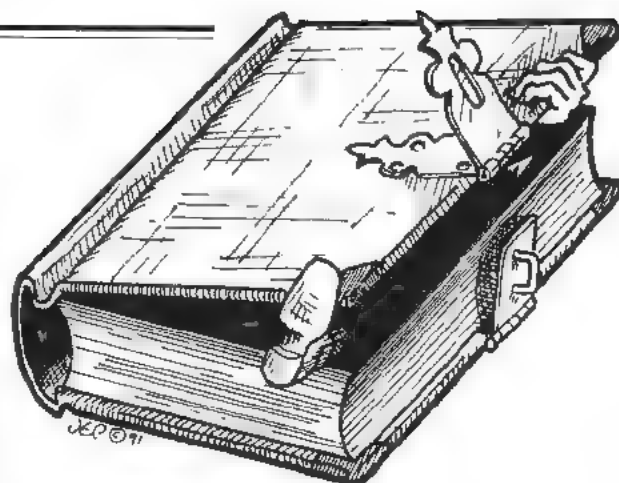
Writers Club Press, 2000

430 Pages—\$20.95

*Scarlet Street* is turning up everywhere these days. Not only can the magazine and its writers be found in the acknowledgments and indexes of many film books, but it's now the preferred reading of fictional characters!

One such is Denton Ward, a crime-solving psychic who, with girlfriend Monty Crocetti (a punk rocker/private investigator, of all things), makes his debut in William Mize's *Resurrection Angel*. Late in the game we learn that Ward subscribes to *The Magazine of Mystery and Horror*, and naturally our admiration for the man increases a thousandfold!

Ward and Crocetti's debut case is filled with bizarre incident familiar to fans of *THE X-FILES*. Lisa Rappaport, a pretty teenager with a wealthy dad and a hunky boyfriend, is not an average amnesiac. For one thing, Ward thinks she might be the victim of alien abduction. For another, she's a pregnant virgin! (Shades of *The Midwich Cuckoos*!) When she's murdered, our heroes must track down



Teen idol Sal Mineo as the doomed gay teenager Plato in the classic *REBEL WITHOUT A CAUSE* (1955).





the killer—whether he's here on earth or a strange being from another planet.

Mize writes well and his plot walks a fine line between mystery and sci fi without once taking a false step. He treats his characters with sensitivity and compassion, a subplot involving the boyfriend being particularly well handled. Here's hoping we'll be seeing more of Denton Ward and Monty Croceth.

—Drew Sullivan

# IB MELCHIOR: MAN OF IMAGINATION

Robert Skotak

Midnight Marquee Press, 2000

320 pages—\$20

Ib Melchior's name may not seem familiar, but here's betting you're familiar with films and TV shows inspired by his writings. Does JOURNEY TO THE 7TH PLANET (1961), TIME TRAVELLERS (1964), DEATH RACE 2000 (1974), or LOST IN SPACE (1965-1968) ring a bell? Yes, this book gives evidence that Irwin Allen ripped off—uh, was inspired by the concepts created by Melchior, and only recently was that inspiration acknowledged by the producers of the big-screen LOST IN SPACE (1998).

Author Robert Skotak, a special effects man and film-history buff, has done a wonderful job of revealing the life of Melchior, who in addition to the above was a multifaceted writer, director, former OSS agent, and Shakespearean scholar. The illustrations from Melchior's personal collection are unique and worth the price of the book alone.

For those who know little or nothing of this man's career, *Ib Melchior: Man of*

*Imagination* is an eye opener. For those who thought they knew Melchior, you won't know it all till you buy this book.

Kevin G. Shunnick

# VAMPIRE OVER LONDON

Frank Dello Stritto and Andi Brooks

Cult Movies Press, 2000

364 pages—\$29.95

Just when you thought everything that could possibly be written about the classic horror stars had already seen print, along comes the fascinating *Vampire Over London*. Bela Lugosi in Britain by Frank J. Dello Stritto and Andi Brooks. For the average horror fan, Dello Stritto and Brooks' book more than holds one's interest. For the Lugosi Cultist who must devour every last scrap of information about their Hungarian hero, it's essential.

Dello Stritto and Brooks take the unique tact of focusing on Lugosi during a poorly documented period of his life, when he toured England in 1951 with a production of his old warhorse, the play DRACULA. It's a popular view that this revival ended almost as soon as it began, but the authors show that it played for quite a few months and racked up a considerable number of performances. They have tracked down and interviewed the surviving members of the company, and even turned up some remarkable remembrances from people who actually saw the show. Center stage, though, is Bela Lugosi, a trooper never giving less than his considerable best as he followed a schedule punishing to a man half his age, battling drug addiction, praying for the success that would once more put him on top of the horror heap.

Not content with shedding light on the DRACULA tour, Dello Stritto and Brooks offer filmic flashbacks to Lugosi's other extended stays in England, when he filmed MYSTERY OF MARIE CELESTE in 1935 and DARK EYES OF LONDON in 1939. They cover OLD MOTHER RILEY MEETS THE VAMPIRE (1952), too, made shortly after the tour.

*Vampire Over London* is attractively produced, with rare photographs in a glossy center section and sprinkled throughout its pages. Unfortunately, the often shoddy editing and proofreading far from meet the standards set by the rest of the book, but this is a relatively minor quibble weighed against the authors' accomplishments. Another minor, though vexing, complaint: the authors set forth the private lives of many of cast members, of their affairs, their marriages, their divorces. Only when they write about Eric Lindsay, who played Renfield, do they fall back on the euphemistic "partner" to describe what the reader can only assume was the actor's lover. (At first he seems only a business partner, till we learn that Lindsay and his partner lived together in "idyllic retirement" until the partner's early death.) The authors may have following the wishes of the actor in forcing their audience to read between the lines, but it's high time we were fed the truth instead of having to search for crumbs in the blank spaces between words.

Don't let these few flaws deter you from reading *Vampire Over London*, however. It's an admirable book, written by that rare breed—film historians who actually know how to write.

—Richard Valley

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## THE PICTURES OF DORIAN GRAY

Continued from page 47

After that, she worked as a script doctor, at Universal. Although Smalley continued as an actor until 1938, he played mostly small roles. Weber and Smalley both died in 1939.

The Thanhouser Film Corporation, of New Rochelle, New York, released its own, completely silent (there is no music score) *THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY* on July 20, 1915, in two parts (two reels). The director, W. Eugene Moore, probably also acted as producer. Harris Gordon offered a thoroughly delightful, scenery-chewing portrayal of Dorian Gray. Helen Fulton, a perky brunette with short, curly hair and sparkling dark eyes, played Evelyn (the Sybil Vane character). W. Ray Johnston was Lord Henry Wotton, while Ernest Howard costarred as Basil Hallward. (Some Thanhouser sources give the character's name as Basil Hayward. A Thanhouser Corporation plot summary in the July 10, 1915 *MPW* calls him Hallward, however.) Supporting roles went to Morgan Jones, Claude Cooper, Arthur Bauer, and N. S. Woods. There is no suggestion of gay relationships between any of the men.

An anonymous, favorable review in the July 24, 1915 issue of *Motion Picture News*, also published verbatim the same day in *MPW*, says, "Producer Moore has made a living document of Oscar Wilde's famous story . . . Harris Gordon plays the title role in sensational fashion, well supported by" the other cast members. The article also gives the release date as July 6, not 20. (Perhaps the earlier date was a special preview showing.) Another review in *MPN* calls this movie, "A strong two reel presentation of Oscar Wilde's famous story. The plot is unusual, and even though none of the familiar epigrams of the author find their way into the subtitles, there is an artistic flavor to the production. . . . Harris Gordon handles the leading role effectively and Helen Fulton was pleasing, as the ill-fated young actress who won Dorian's heart. The story is unusual, and well worth while."

The American Film Institute acquired a damaged but salvageable copy of this movie in 1988, and transferred the original two reels of decaying nitrate film onto one reel of modern 35mm archival film. Although the AFI had no choice but to work with an incomplete print, the high quality of Thanhouser's original makes this movie well worth watching for Dorian devotees.

Reel One now begins with Dorian Gray, wearing tails and a top hat as he sits in a theater box seat at a performance of Shakespeare's *ROMEO AND JULIET*. (The missing opening footage must introduce Basil, Lord Henry, and the portrait.) Harris Gordon's Dorian is attractive, in an average sort of way, but he looks half-cracked, an extreme example of the obsessed fan, drooling over the lovely leading lady, Evelyn. "After the Performance, He Obtains an Introduction to 'Juliet,'" proclaims the intertitle. The stage manager who introduces them is a grotesque, anti-Semitic stereotype of a Jew (conforming to the source novel), who can't disguise his glee at the prospect of this wealthy man courting one of the actresses. "Night After Night He Views His New Love in Her Various Roles," proclaims another intertitle. The delightfully comical romance between Evelyn and Dorian dominates the entire first reel, which includes a long scene of Evelyn playing Rosalind in *AS YOU LIKE IT* to enthusiastic audiences, while Dorian, having memorized every line of her script, makes a fool of himself by going through the motions with her from his box seat. (At least he doesn't eat his program bite by bite, as Turhan Bey does while watching Susanna Foster in 1944's *THE CLIMAX*!)

In his luxurious home (decorated in the opulent, Orientalist style then popular), Dorian receives his portrait: a life-sized bust looking grave and sweet in a suit with a flower in his buttonhole. He admires it with some of the same ardor he shows for Evelyn, a hint of the fatal narcissism to come. As in Wilde's novel, the darkness descends

when Dorian tries to show off his intended, by bringing Basil and Lord Henry to the theater. "Conscious of the Presence of the Man She Loves, the Actress Forgets Her Lines." The prompter shouts dialogue from the wings, but she performs so dismally that finally he gives up, throws down his script and walks out. The curtain falls on this debacle in mid-scene.

In her dressing room, Evelyn explains to Dorian that, "I Love You So Much I Can No Longer Play at Being in Love." He brutally rejects her: "You Have Humiliated Me Before My Friends and I Hate You!" Reel One ends with this scene. The viewer can track the break in the continuity by watching Dorian's hat, which he has placed on top of her hatbox on a cabinet. After a sudden gap of black film, the scene jumps abruptly to a snappet, only a fraction of a second long, in which Evelyn slumps distraught in the foreground. Dorian, stalking off down the hall behind her, now carries the hat in his hand. Then the scene breaks off abruptly again, and goes to black.

Next comes the intertitle card the AFI has inserted in the archival copy to indicate "Part Two." At this point, Thanhouser's synopsis (*MPW*, July 10, 1915) states, "Then he left, and heard in the morning that she killed herself. It only stirred him vaguely." Nothing of the kind occurs in the surviving print. The absence of this information leaves the plot confusing, because Evelyn completely disappears from the movie at the end of Reel One. The titles never mention her again, nor does any scene show anyone revealing her fate to Dorian. Reel Two begins (in the middle of the one-reel archival print) with Dorian at home the next morning. Wearing his dressing gown as he finishes breakfast and lights a cigarette, he goes to admire his portrait and sees the first signs of cruelty appear around the mouth (in a double exposure). He hides the telltale picture under a Spanish shawl in an attic room, and lies to Basil about why he moved it. (In Wilde's novel, it is during the breakfast scene that Lord Henry arrives to tell Dorian of Sybil's suicide. Lord Henry is a minor character in the film, not the baleful influence of the novel, unless he does something naughty in the missing opening scenes.)

As the years pass, Dorian grows more eccentric and self-absorbed, sometimes stepping aside from his guests at his lavish, drunken parties to admire his youthful charm in the mirror. He puts up a good front, but whenever he steels himself to go look at the picture, he's upset by the ravages of his debauchery. He succumbs to drugs. On the last night of his life, when he unfolds a paper packet, snorts something from it, then greedily licks the paper, he mocks and jeers at the portrait. Then he reacts with horror when the picture changes from ageing and moderately depraved to something totally grotesque, right before his eyes. In a double exposure combined with a matte shot (with Harris Gordon visible in the same frame) the gray hair of the picture towers into a bushy mess, the mouth twists into a snarl with teeth bared, and the skin ulcerates. (Of course, all this might be Dorian's drug hallucination.)

Basil, waiting and wondering what's become of his friend, paces impatiently and finally ventures upstairs. "That Is a Picture of My Soul. I Forbid You to Look At It," Dorian cries. They struggle. Dorian shoves Basil out the door and slams it. (He never murders anyone in this film. In fact, it's not clear exactly what he does that's so heinous, other than drink a lot, get stoned, and fool around with Loose Women.) After listening to Dorian laughing and raving insanely, Basil fetches the butler to help break down the attic door. Before they can do so, Dorian impulsively stabs the portrait twice in the heart. In agony, he falls to the floor on his face. When Basil and the butler burst through the door, they find the canvas whole and the portrait as the artist originally painted it. "They Found a Dead Man on the Floor, Wrinkled and Loathsome of Visage, Wearing the Ring of Dorian Gray." The audience sees the signet ring, but must take the title's word for the



wretched state of Dorian's face, since (disappointingly) the camera never shows it.

Also in 1915, a Russian production company, Thiemann & Reinhard, brought out a highly innovative version of the story, *PORTRET DORYANA GREYA* (aka *THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY*). This movie is probably lost. *PORTRET DORYANA GREYA* premiered on December 1, 1915 in Russia, as part of the studio's "Golden Series" of full length feature films based on literary works. Originally planned for 82 scenes in three reels the silent expanded during production to approximately 6,968 feet, about an hour and three-quarters long. The studio head, Pavel Gustavovich Thiemann, formerly one of Russia's top three producers, lost favor with the government (then in the middle of WWI), due to his Baltic German heritage. After anti-German riots, some of his directors and stars quit in 1915. He maintained his high standards and his artistic ambitions as he made this movie while fighting to save his business. Eventually, he fled Russia.

Director Vsevolod Meyerhold came to Thiemann in 1915. Born in 1874, Meyerhold fell under suspicion all his life as "that Jew" and as a social and political nonconformist. As late as 1912, he sneered at film as a medium best suited to newsreels, not serious artistic expression, until Danish and German expressionist moviemakers changed his mind. He chose *The Picture of Dorian Gray* for his first movie project and codirected with Mikhail Doronin. Aleksandr Levitsky handled the camera work. Expressionist-influenced Vladimir Yegorov, who went on to a long and distinguished career, won acclaim for his avant-garde set design for *PORTRET*, in his first job as a movie art director. Meyerhold also wrote the scenario and costarred as Lord Henry Wotton. He made the controversial decision to star a woman, Varvara Yanova, as Dorian Gray, in male clothing. (Shades of Greta Garbo!)

Meyerhold revolutionized silent scenario-writing, with dialogue for the actors to help them stay in character, and specific directions for the crew. Meyerhold often used Oscar Wilde's epigrams in the intertitles. Codirector Doronin also played a role (probably Basil Hallward), and the rest of the cast included Alexander Volkov, P. Belova, G. Enriton, and Y. Uvarova. (The full names of most of the actors, along with the roles they played, haven't turned up yet.)

Jay Leyda writes in *Kinor: A History of the Russian and Soviet Film* (Princeton University Press, 1960), "Like the true experimenter that he was, he threw himself into this new work with his full enormous energy and imagination. He employed every means to set this symbolistic tale of downfall in an atmosphere of luxury, decadence, and subtle horror. Vladimir Yegorov was employed to design the few built sets, and Meyerhold borrowed from his Moscow friends quantities of rich and tasteful 'properties.' The cast was largely drawn from outside the studio personnel . . . The entire film was composed in bold black and white masses with dramatically lit figures against dark backgrounds or striking silhouetted figures against bright backgrounds, as in Dorian's caped figure outlined against a huge high-keved theatre poster lit by a single street light overhead. The resultant film was acclaimed by critics of vision, and pretty generally disliked by the public at large. It was original and daring as few films before it or since have dared to be. Russian artists who saw it and then *THE CABINET OF DR. CALIGARI* a few years later in Europe, tell me that if it had been shown abroad it would have surpassed *CALIGARI*'s reputation as a heightening of film art. It was undoubtedly the most important Russian film made previous to the February Revolution."

The Soviets executed Meyerhold in 1940 for political "crimes."

The next silent *THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY* was a 1916 full-length feature (5,752 feet long, in six reels) from Barker Neptune/Browne in England. Fred W. Durrant directed a scenario written by Rowland Talbot. Henry Victor

starred as Dorian Gray, with Sydney Bland (Horace Holly in the 1916 version of *SHE*) as Basil Hallward, Pat O'Malley as Sybil Vane, Dorothy Fane as Lady Marchmont (her first screen role), and Jack Jordan as Lord Henry Wootton. (This variant spelling as "Wootton" appears in nearly all the published cast lists.) Their costars included Douglas Cox as James Vane, Miriam Ferris in an unidentified role, and A.B. Imeson as Satan. In this version, the picture's magic stems from Dorian's deal with the Devil.

Though born in England, Henry Victor grew up in Germany and spoke English with a German accent. Among horror and fantasy fans, he's best known for playing the leading role of Leo Vincey in the 1916 Barker version of *SHE*, the cruel sideshow strongman, Hercules, in *FREAKS* (1932); and zombie master Miklos Sangre in *KING OF THE ZOMBIES* (1941). (Victor also appeared as a Saxon Warrior in 1932's *THE MUMMY*, but his scene didn't survive the final cut.) He made the transition from silents to talkies by specializing in Nazi villain roles.

Except for Henry Victor, most members of the cast were second stringers or new to the screen. The movie received scant attention and mixed reviews. Robert B. Connelly writes in *The Motion Picture Guide: Silent Film 1910-1936* (Cinebooks, 1986), "Oscar Wilde's classic novel . . . is not done justice in this stodgy, early British version. The flamboyant Irish author would no doubt have been much more pleased with the Hollywood version of 1944."

Next came *DAS BILDNIS DES DORIAN GRAY* (aka *THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY*), from Richard-Oswald-Produktion of Germany, in 1917. Bernd Aldor starred as Dorian Gray, with Lea Lara, Ernst Ludwig, Lupu Pick, Ernst Pittschau, and Andreas Van Horn. Richard Oswald produced, directed, and wrote the scenario, with art direction by Manfred Noa and camerawork by Max Fassbender. The film was in eight reels (80 minutes long) and is probably lost.

Oswald, born Richard Ornstein in Vienna, Austria in 1880, trained at the Dramatische Hochschule in Vienna and began his career as a theatrical director. He then enjoyed a successful career as an expressionist filmmaker in Germany, beginning in 1914. He opened his own production company in 1916 and is best known to horror fans for *CAGLIOSTRO* (1928) and the classic *ALRAUNE* (aka *DAUGHTER OF EVIL*, 1930). Oswald's career faded after he fled the Nazis to settle in the United States. He later returned to his homeland, where he died in Dusseldorf in 1963.

The last silent film of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* may be *AZ ÉLET KIRÁLYA*, a six-reel feature (5,971 feet, or about an hour and a half), filmed in Budapest in 1917 by a Hungarian company, Star-film, and released in Hungary on January 21, 1918. This movie is also known by at least two variant titles in the States, where it appears in Bela Lugosi filmographies as *THE ROYAL LIFE* and as *THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY*. Alfréd Deésy directed a scenario by József Pakots, with production design by István Lhotka Szonothay.

According to István Nemeskürty in *Word and Image. History of the Hungarian Cinema* (Corvina, 1968), "A production record was set by Alfréd Deésy who made 34 films in three years beginning late in 1915. Since he produced only one film in 1915 and only two in 1916, he must have shot 15 or 16 films a year in 1917 and 1918. This shows the mass production methods of Star." Norbert Dán starred as Dorian Gray. The other players included Lajos Gellért (using the name Viktor Kurd) as Jim, Annie Göth as Princess Marborough, Ella Hollán, Richard Kornay (or Kornai) as The Prince, Ilia Lóth as Sybil Vane, Gusztáv Turán (or Twian) as Basil Hallward, and Camilla von Hollay (using the name Camilla or Kamilla Hollay) as Heth.

Sources disagree about Bela Lugosi's role in this movie. Lugosi, destined like Wallace Reid to suffer the ravages of morphine addiction, used the screen name Arisztid Olt

*Continued on page 77*

## HURD HATFIELD

*Continued from page 52*

people like Michael Curtiz, and I simply couldn't take that phony accent! He'd been in America 30 years and he still had a phony accent! I usually got along with my directors, but I didn't get along with a semi phony like Curtiz, he wasn't a good director. I couldn't take those affectations. Nicholas Ray was a good director on *KING OF KINGS*. He was marvelous! My directors in the theater have been wonderful. Laurence Olivier and Elia Kazan and Joseph Antony, for whom I did an absolutely wonderful play for which I was named one of the 10 best performances of the year, along with one by Henry Fonda. . . .

**SS:** You appeared in an RKO Tarzan movie, didn't you?

**HH:** *TARZAN AND THE SLAVE GIRL*. It was fun. Film biographers are so square—they think that, because of *DORIAN GRAY* and being at the pinnacle, I slid down to doing a Tarzan movie because I was starving or something. I wanted to do a Tarzan movie; it amused me. They have no humor, these biographical people. Some of them *TARZAN AND THE SLAVE GIRL* was fun to make, and I was paid very well. Arthur Shields, Barry Fitzgerald's brother, was in it, and Lex Barker was Tarzan. We became great friends, and tragically he had a heart attack in New York, coming out of Bloomington. He had just left me a message, inviting me to his birthday party. I went to his funeral, and I cried all through it—because we were having a reunion and he just dropped.

**SS:** He was only 54 years old.

**HH:** We were going to take a house—together with his wife, who was Spanish—we were going to take a house in Hollywood, long after *TARZAN*, because I was doing a lot of television. He said, "Why don't we take a place together?" So we were very friendly. He was also sick. He had some emotional problems.

**SS:** A book by Lana Turner's daughter, Cheryl Crane, said he was brutal when he was married to Turner.

**HH:** In the long run, it's better to play Dorian Gray than Tarzan or Frankenstein or Dracula. You're really stuck! Lex was a much better actor than just playing Tarzan, he did some interesting things and had a very successful career in Europe.

**SS:** Lex Barker was married to Arlene Dahl, too, at one stage.

**HH:** That's right, to Arlene Dahl. His last wife Mana remarried. She's a baroness, she's married to one of the richest men in the world, but she still speaks warmly of Lex. He was one of the few actors in the social register. Not that that's especially desirable.

**SS:** You made what has been called a psychological Western, *THE LEFT HANDED GUN*.

**HH:** Arthur Penn made that before *BONNIE AND CLYDE*. A strange film, I loved that. I think it was my best role, really, but it was cut by Jack Warner! He was one of those monsters who ran the studios, and he ruined it. You shouldn't be allowed to do that. A painter paints a

painting and you don't go in and change it; you don't have the right. So they ruined it, and it would have been a brilliant film. I had a wonderful role. I think my role still comes out well.

**SS:** Did you find that you had difficulty playing opposite Paul Newman's Actors Studio style of method acting?

**HH:** Oh, no, no, we became great friends. I acted with his wife, Joanne Woodward, too. She was in a supporting role in a play I was starring in before she made the grade. She's a wonderful person and a good actor, they're both lovely people, because they never lost their heads over the whole thing of being stars.

**SS:** Like *THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY*, *THE LEFT HANDED GUN* is famous for its gay subtext.

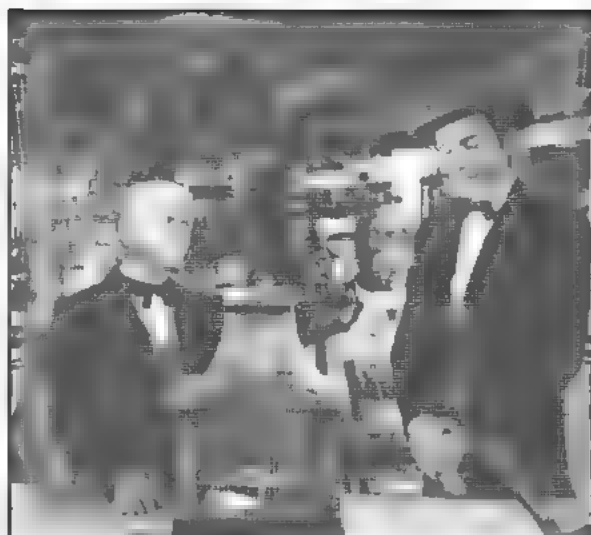
**HH:** People keep reading all these things into Billy the Kid. Again, this homosexual thing—they're determined to hang that on me. Well, I didn't play it that way or realize that my character was in love with Billy the Kid. This Freud really does a lot of damage! Everything has to have a subtext! I didn't have that in my mind at all, though, and Arthur Penn didn't indicate that. My character was an aficionado—a nut who followed Billy the Kid around and wrote him and created the legend. That's my kind of part, a real character part! I remember Arthur Penn had a fairly difficult, long scene—movies are hell because, besides the acting, you have to think of the lighting, and can't turn your head too far one way or the other. I got the whole scene, which had a running time of about 10 minutes, in one take and the crew applauded. And that's very rare! Arthur came up and kissed me on the head, and said, "Talent! It's wonderful!"

**SS:** You worked for Arthur Penn again in *MICKEY ONE*.

**HH:** With Warren Beatty. I never understood *MICKEY ONE*. It was so avant garde that I didn't know what it was about! (Laughs) I got wonderful notices, but it was very obscure, very artsy; I never understood it. We did it in Chicago, not my favorite place—it's either roasting hot or freezing cold—and Warren was young, then, and had a lot of inhibitions. It was very frustrating, I didn't enjoy it. I felt that the script was very pretentious. I said, "I know what's wrong with this film. There are no verbs!" Everybody just said, "Your eyes! The river! The car!" I found that a big bore, although I do admire Arthur Penn very much.

**SS:** Warren Beatty excepted, you seem to get a kick out of your costars.

**HH:** I did *THE BOSTON STRANGLER* because I wanted to work with Henry Fonda. I did virtually nothing in *JOAN OF ARC*, but I wanted to work with Ingrid Bergman. I did things for reasons that I just don't know! (Laughs) Not for the money! I played Off Broadway, and



Throughout his long career, Hurd Hatfield found himself trapped like a little yellow bird by the role of Dorian Gray. With time, he grew to be philosophical about his signature characterization.

my agent nearly threw me out! He said, "You can't work for \$25 a week!" I said, "I want to do this play!" I did it, I got rave notices and was named one of the 10 best performances of the year and wound up in *Time* magazine—all for \$25 a week! Geraldine Page, one of the best actresses I worked with, was like that. She would do what she wanted. Her last film she did for two nights in Ireland, and she was the most brilliant actress in the theater. We did *THE IMMORALIST* together on stage in Chicago. We had to leave the city when it got so cold!

**SS:** Doesn't it bother you, really, that for all your accomplishments you're chiefly associated with one role?

**HH:** No, I'm accustomed to the Dorian Grayness. (Laughs) I have lots of fans; just last month in Germany—well, I was amazed! The streets were full of fans, and where they got the photographs of me—it was amazing! Now were almost to the end. I think I did much too much television, as I said, but I had family to support and I got trapped in it. I did *THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO* for Sidney Lumet, which was a huge, huge hit. That was a 90 minute special. About 15 years later, Richard Chamberlain did it. He's a wonderful actor, whom I admire. I sent him a note, once, on his opening night in the play. I wrote him, "You've done all the parts that I have—Hamlet and so forth, only better."

**SS:** So you've even played Hamlet!

**HH:** I did my first Hamlet, oh, 30 years ago, in Salt Lake City. I worked with Kazan and Tennessee Williams and studied with Michael Chekhov. All this has made my life very full, and I love it here. I wouldn't live anywhere else but Ireland. I love being an American—I wouldn't give up my citizenship—but I love living here. Well, my middle name is McGuire! (Laughs) I love Ireland, I love my Irish friends. Still, I hope they don't get too modern for me. I'm an old fashioned kid!

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## THE BEAST WITH FIVE FINGERS

*Continued from page 34*

**Bruce:** Isn't this your handwriting, Hilary?

**Hilary:** No, it's Ingram's. His hand wrote it! Don't you see, the hand, it must be here! I have to find it! It must be somewhere! You must help me find it!

**Bruce:** There's no hand, Hilary. It's only in your mind.

No sooner is Hilary left alone than he encounters the hand again in the film's strangest scene. Hilary he locates it scuttling along behind his precious books, captures it almost lovingly—and nails it to something on the desk ("I caught it. I caught it. I locked it up. The horrible hand can't escape anymore. Now it can't get out. It can't.")

Unfortunately, here the film starts to unravel. There's nothing especially wrong with the scene in which the Arlingtons discover the hand in the safe, but the aftermath is awkward and the sequences far too prolonged to be believable. It's possible to believe that Donald might run from the shock of the discovery, but the setup leaving Julie alone with the insane Hilary for the bulk of the story is awkward and unbelievable. The confrontation scenes are fine, except for the fact that they rely heavily on the base stupidity of a heroine not only telling a man she knows to be an insane killer that she knows he's an insane killer, and compounding this suicidal assninity by informing him that she hasn't told anyone what she knows! We're then asked to believe that she suddenly becomes smart enough to dupe Hilary into protecting her from the marauding hand. ("Listen, the hand; it's playing down there! The hand! It's Ingram's hand!") This leads to the admittedly bravura sequence of Hilary's last encounter with the hand and his death by imagining it is strangling him, but the buildup is false, and the followup explanation to the mystery is too much to buy. (Why would a sane Hilary—if there ever was such a thing—install a secret gramophone inside a suit armor?)

As with all of Florey's work, what most annoys about **THE BEAST WITH FIVE FINGERS** is that it contains so much that is good so much that is nearly brilliant, that it keeps flirting with greatness, only to fall short. Part of the problem is grounded in Siodmak's screenplay, but it's too much to believe that the director isn't also at fault, since the

failings are so much a part of the rest of his work. In the end, we're left with another Florey frustration—but there's just enough that works to ensure the hand a respectable footnote in the history of horror film.

## THE PICTURES OF DORIAN GRAY

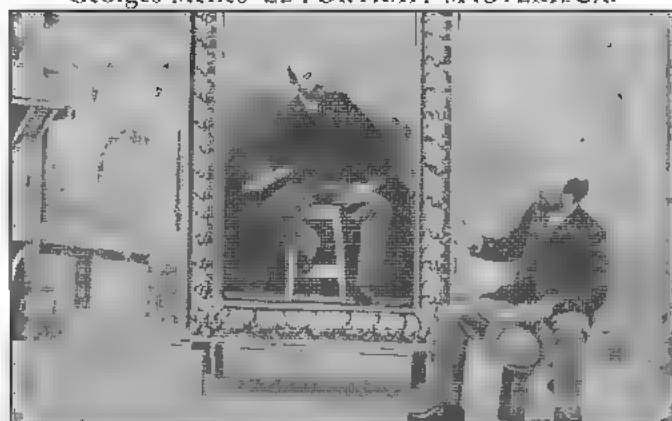
*Continued from page 75*

while making movies in Hungary. Roy Pickard, in *Who Played Who on the Screen* (Hippocrene, 1988), says that Lugosi played Lord Henry Wotton. However, Richard Bojarski, author of *The Films of Bela Lugosi* (Citadel, 1980), claims that Lugosi played Dorian Gray's butler. A photograph reproduced in Bojarski's own book seems to contradict this assessment, however. In this still, a scene of Basil Hallward's studio, Lugosi's character, standing, looms close over the shoulder of the seated Dorian Gray. Off to the side, the artist, paint palette in hand, looks at the portrait. Dorian, with an apprehensive expression, cringes away from Lugosi's character, who is sticking a rude, pointing finger almost into Dorian's face. Lugosi wears that same aggressive, fendish, conniving expression that he later made famous in *DRACULA* (1931). He looks, in fact, as if he's playing the Svengali-like character of Wotton.

Well, it's a mystery, and far from the only one left. It's possible that, to date, nobody has catalogued and described all of the silent movies of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.

To be Continued

Georges Méliès' LE PORTRAIT MYSTERIEUX.





## EMPIRE OF THE IMAGINATION

Continued from page 67

The tall, gorgeous Betty Blythe, already a hit as Fox's THE QUEEN OF SHEBA (1921), received lip-licking reviews in the scantily clad title role of SHE. While she performed in adequately imperious style, her acting attracted fewer comments than the diaphanous costumes that reveal considerably more of top and bottom than the Production Code would allow a few years later. In the Pillar of Fire scene at the end, Blythe arranges her thigh-length hair to conceal most of the naughty bits, then drops her gown to stand naked in the flame. Wanton sexuality and peekaboo nipples in Roaring Twenties movies such as this one helped provoke the censorship crackdowns of the morality police in the austere thirties.

Handsome Carlyle Blackwell Sr. played Leo Vincey and Kallikrates as male bimbos. Heavy, powerful Heinrich George, glowering from under his brow ridge, hammed it up as the bearded, apelike father figure, Horace Holly. The other major roles went to Mary Odette (Ustane), Tom Reynolds (Job), Jerrold Robertshaw (biblically robed, white-haired Billali), and Marjorie Statler (Amenartas, which many reviewers misspell as "Amenartes"). Actors who play members of the spear-chucking Amahagger tribe wear cave-man clothes and dark but not Negroid makeup, in keeping with Haggard's stipulation that they're descendants of ancestors of the ancient Egyptians. Some of the outrageously campy bloodthirsty cannibals wear huge, beaky noses, unpleasantly suggestive of anti-Semitic caricatures.

This SHE, shot partly on location in Ireland and partly in Berlin inside a Zeppelin hangar (where barely dressed Betty Blythe half froze), shows the rapid progress in film technology, including smoother camera work, an improvement on the jerky jerkiness of earlier hand-cranked silents. Evidently, some prints of this movie were released on tinted film stock, while others were hand colored. (This color was original, not later "colorizing.")

Art director Heinrich Richter created cheesy but oddly impressive sets, strongly influenced by archaeologists' finds in Egypt, a hot topic in the news during the Roaring Twenties. In only two more years, filmmakers would learn to synchronize soundtracks well enough to produce the first talking pictures. In common with many silents of this era, the 1925 SHE isn't truly silent. W. L. Trytel arranged Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov's incidental music, from his opera SAD-KO, for a musical soundtrack. Sometimes, the music fits the action. Often, it doesn't. In particular, it's jarring to hear contemplative, mysterious music as background to the big fight scene in which the Amahagger tribe attacks and tries

to "hot-pot" the English travellers! Oh, well, the professional music, the same for every showing, probably suits the movie better than some of the accompaniments local organists tried to improvise on the spot for true silents.

The opening credits claim that "The subtitles for this production were specially written by the late Sir H. Rider Haggard." This statement may be literally true, but it's misleading. Of course, Haggard "specially wrote" the original novel! It seems likely that Walter Summers, who wrote the scenario, selected and paraphrased from the novel for the titles. During the last year of his life, Haggard suffered from serious ill health, including gout, influenza, repeated attacks of bronchitis and digestive disorders, and finally a serious bladder infection. He stopped writing fiction early in 1925. He dictated his final diary entry on March 26. The bladder infection finally killed him at age 68, on May 14, 1925, less than two weeks after the release of this movie. Nobody has presented credible evidence that Haggard actively worked on a film during the painful months leading up to his death.

The influential critic "Sime," writing in the July 14, 1926 issue of *Variety*, hated nearly everything about this SHE. He slammed it as a bad example of Sidney Blythe's photography and everything "Sime" thought was wrong with English moviemaking. It's true that the movie's scenario is an old-fashioned, slow-moving melodrama, performed in a less modern, less naturalistic acting fashion than the 1911 Thanhouser version. In the 1925 SHE, the actors use the obsolete style of mime-influenced, exaggerated gesticulation and facial contortion. However, someone interested in film history may find it fascinating that the 1911 SHE is ahead of its time in exactly the ways that the 1925 SHE is behind its time, while each reflects the technical advances of its own period.

Other critics have treated this box-office hit more generously. Philip Leibfried notes that the scenario "is faithful to the source material and is the last time that Holly was portrayed as an ugly man, as he is described in the book. It is also the final time that Ayesha killed Ustane herself, rather than delegating the task." That's a good point: DeCordova follows Haggard's original in not softening Ayesha or building in excuses for her. She's a femme fatale, evil displaying itself in a lovely, tempting package.

This last of the silent movies of SHE, released the year H. Rider Haggard died, represents the end of an era in more ways than one.

**NEXT: The birth of the talkies brings the immortal Ayesha into the modern age.**

## SCREEN

Continued from page 29

monster movie that's a passably enjoyable timekiller in 2001 will evolve into one of those good ol' cheapies that they just don't make any more!

If you don't have a few decades to spare, then catch PYTHON now and take it for what it is—a fun throwback to those bottom-of-the-bill fright flicks of the Fab Fifties, with an oversized beastie running amok and a genre icon or two (in the case of PYTHON, it's Robert Englund sans Freddy makeup, STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION whipping boy Wil Wheaton all punked up with nowhere to go, and world's shortest Tarzan Casper Van Dien) giving their all as heroes and snake food.

Leads Frayne Rosanoff, Dana Barron, Sara Mornell, William Zabka, and Chris Owens are all acceptable substitutes for John Agar and Faith Domergue, though

whether they'll be turning up at horror cons 30 years from now remains moot. You won't be seeing any python model, that's for sure, because it's all done digitally these days. Ah, well, by then the FX of 2001 will look as quaint as King Kong does to the unenlightened kids of today.

Richard Valley

## CRIMSON

Continued from page 35

Bela Lugosi for company. And—Kathleen Burke. I don't believe she ever appeared at a con, did she? She sure would have made a big hit.) At least, to the tune of her mother's signature song, "Falling in Love Again," I got to sing to Maria Riva (in German) "I Am From Head to Toe Dedicated to Marlene." And 68 years after I met Marlene (on the set of BLONDE VENUS), I visited her grave and whispered, "Your little fan is back, Marlene."

At Cult Con I had the pleasure of being situated next to the dealer's table of *Scarlet Street's* editor/publisher Richard Valley and managing editor Tom Amorosi, both of whom were guests in the Ackermanson. At one time during their visit there were 10 fans guesting in my Chaney Memorial Room, Karloff/Lugosi Room, METROPOLIS Room, even on the floor!

My brandnew sci-fi Ohenryan, "All Hail, Hi-lary!" will be included in my Sense of Wonder Press' *Forry's Fantasylarns, Sci-Fi Tales and Others 1928-2000*. Shhhh! some are R-rated. Coming up at Fanex I'm scheduled to receive the coveted Laemmle Award and during the year I'm invited to be the Guest of Honour at the Fantasy Film Fest in England. I'm signed up to attend the World SF Con in Tokyo in 2007! My Japanese is a little rusty, but I'll have seven years to practice.

Sayonara till next Crimson Chronicles!



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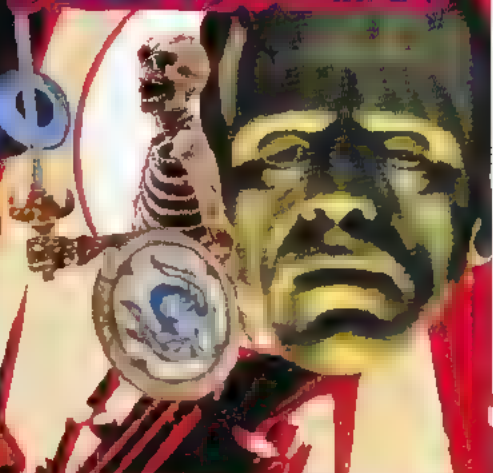


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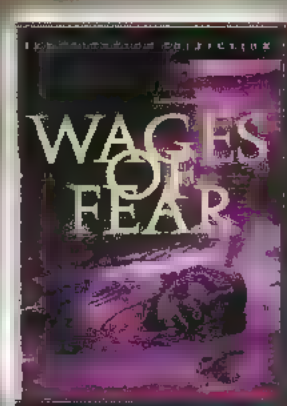
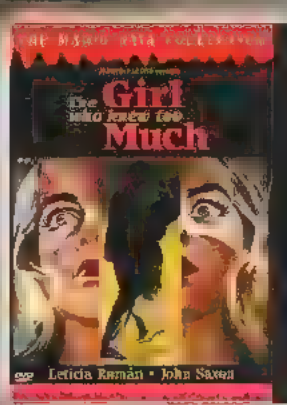
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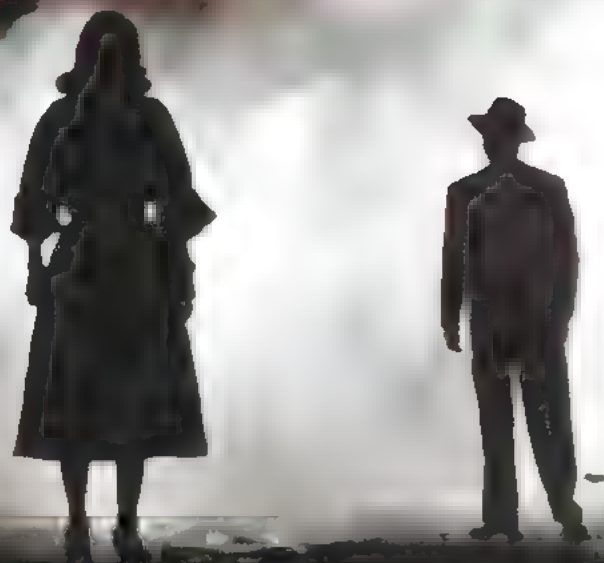
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She  
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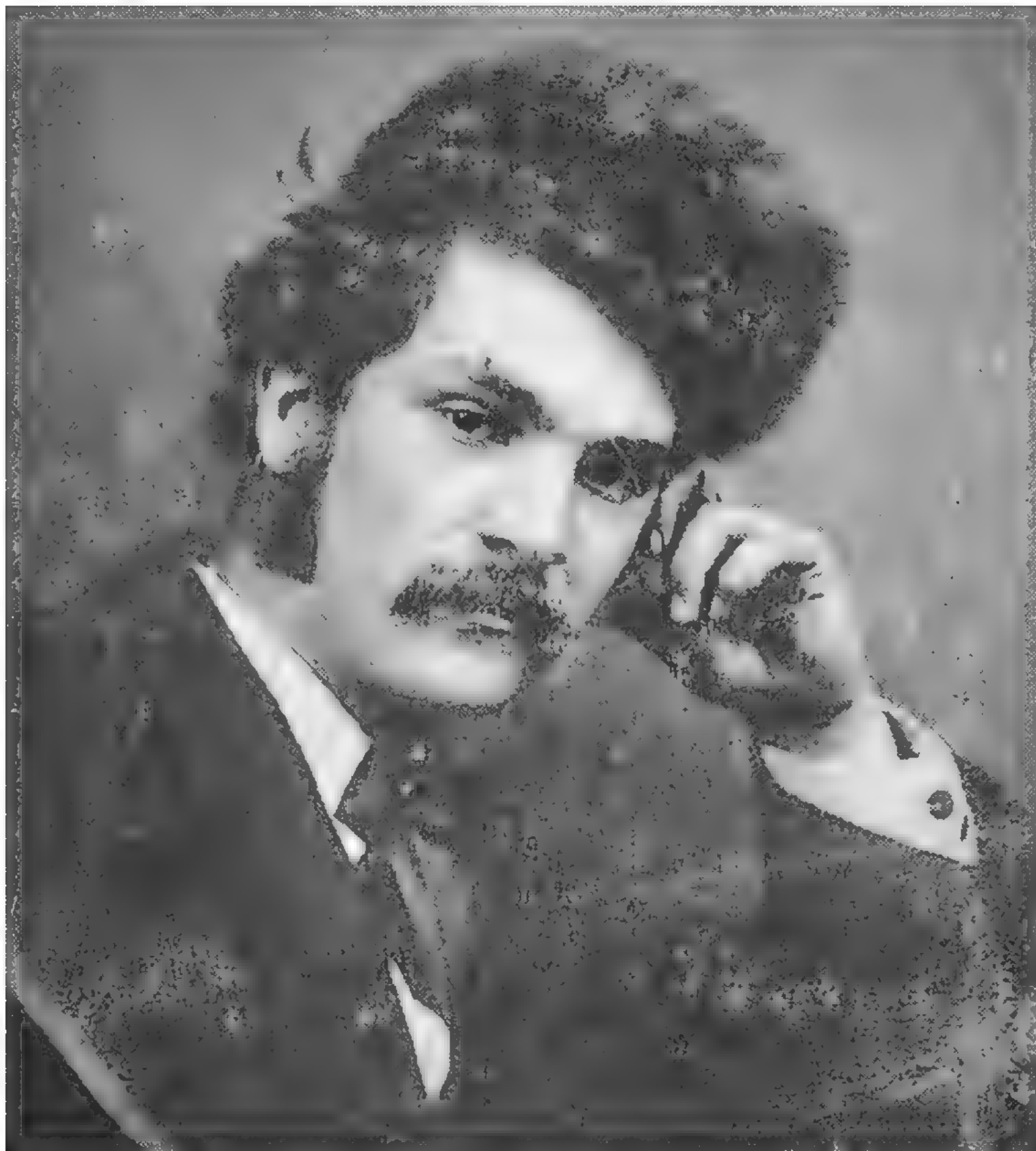
















































































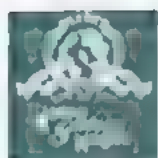






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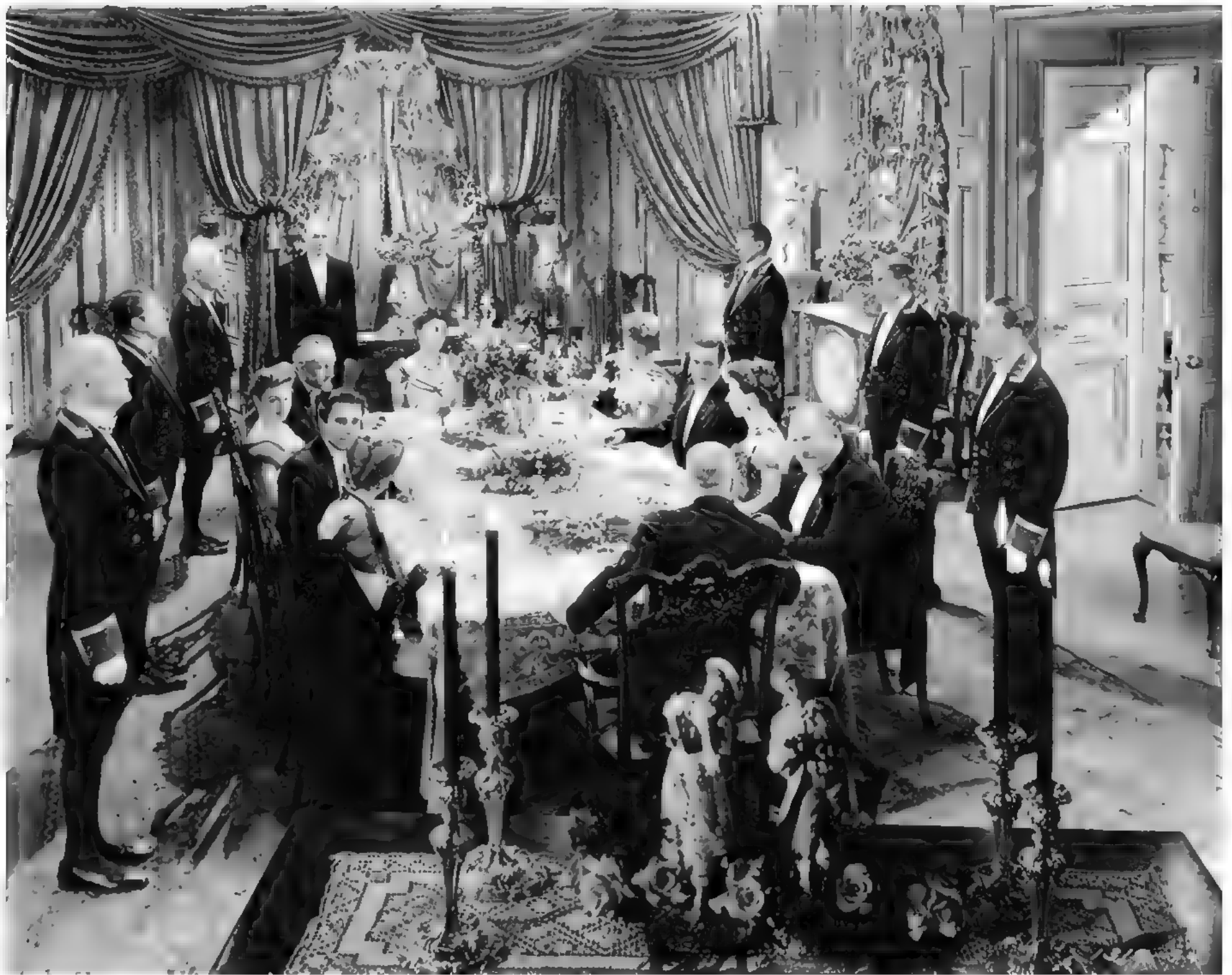
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D'après le roman d'OSCAR WILDE  
RÉALISATION DE ALBERT LEWIN

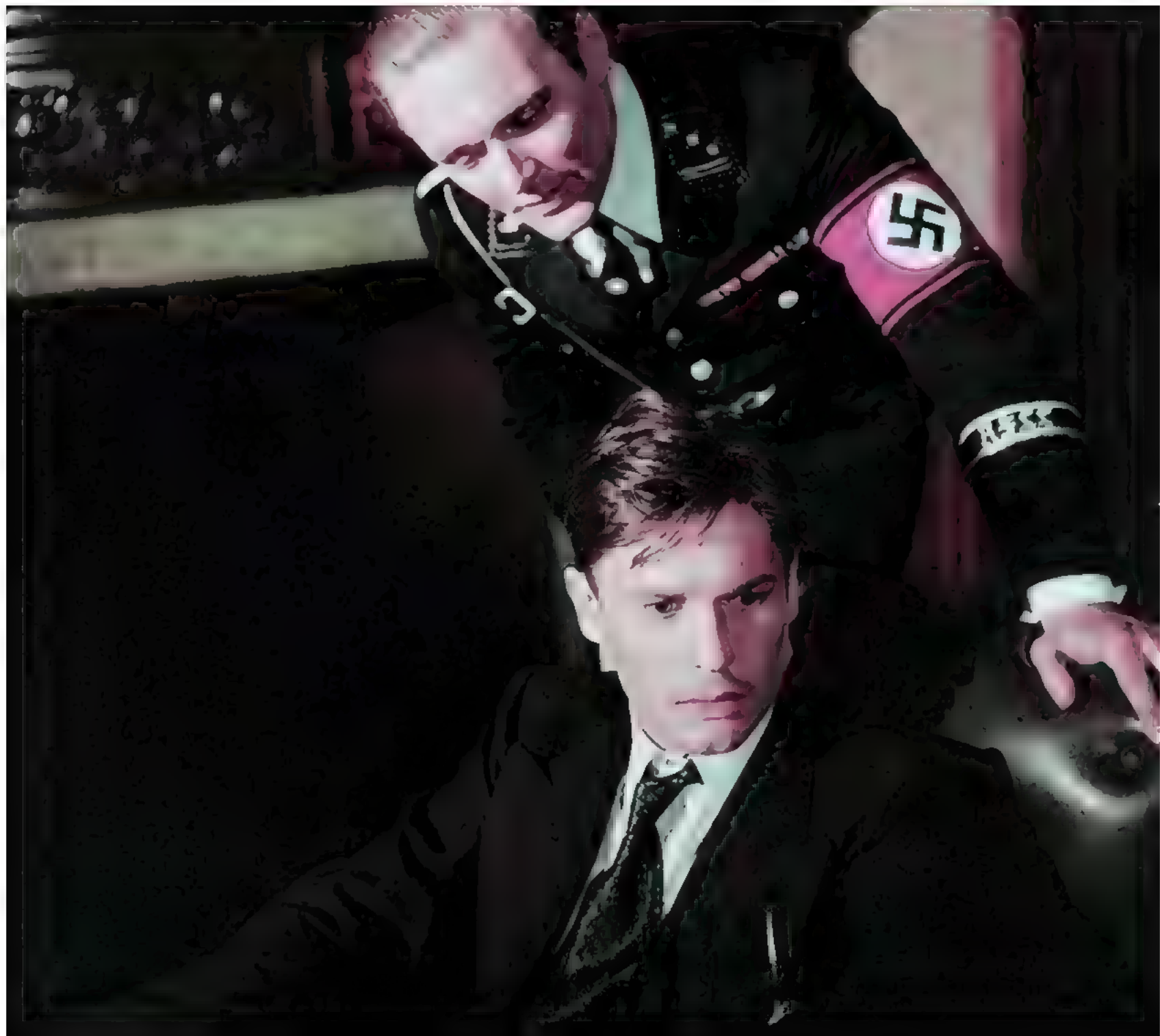














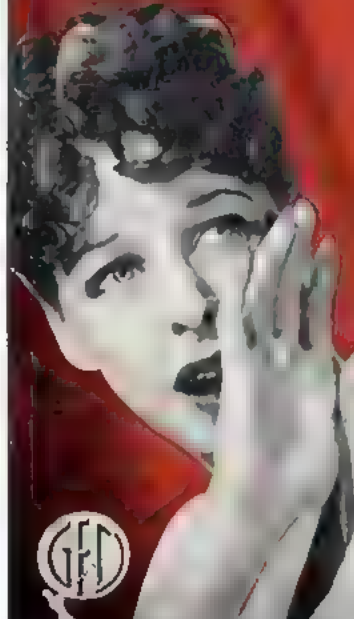
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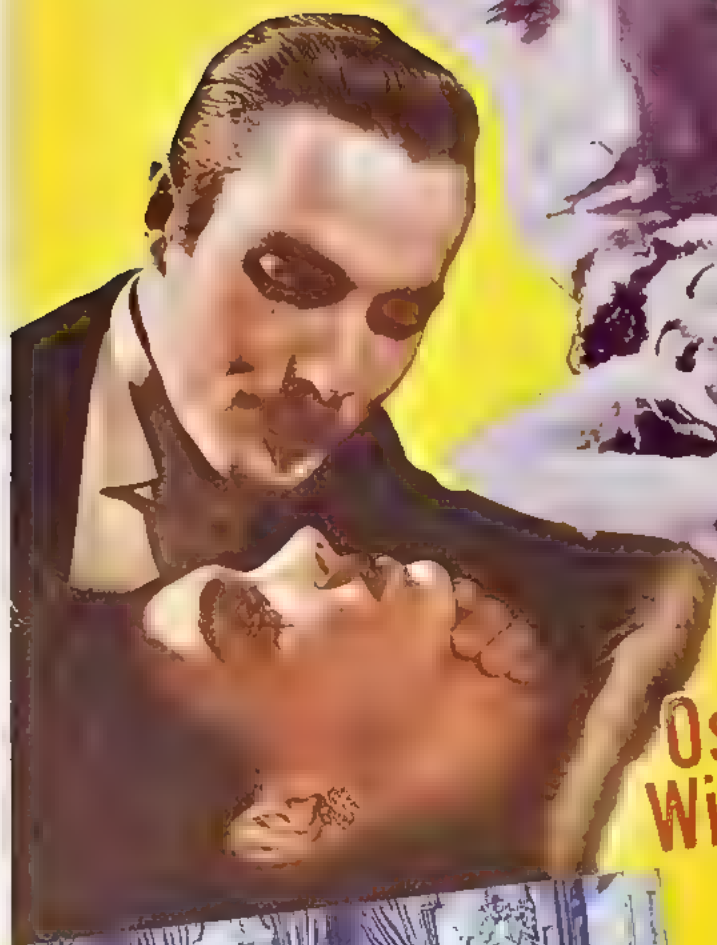
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